



## Calhoun: The NPS Institutional Archive DSpace Repository

---

Theses and Dissertations

1. Thesis and Dissertation Collection, all items

---

1995-12

### Role of SOF in paramilitary operations

Cox, Steven J.

Monterey, California. Naval Postgraduate School

---

<http://hdl.handle.net/10945/31295>

---

This publication is a work of the U.S. Government as defined in Title 17, United States Code, Section 101. Copyright protection is not available for this work in the United States.

*Downloaded from NPS Archive: Calhoun*



<http://www.nps.edu/library>

Calhoun is the Naval Postgraduate School's public access digital repository for research materials and institutional publications created by the NPS community.

Calhoun is named for Professor of Mathematics Guy K. Calhoun, NPS's first appointed -- and published -- scholarly author.

Dudley Knox Library / Naval Postgraduate School  
411 Dyer Road / 1 University Circle  
Monterey, California USA 93943

# **NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL**

## **MONTEREY, CALIFORNIA**



## **THESIS**

**ROLE OF SOF IN PARAMILITARY  
OPERATIONS**

by

Steven J. Cox

December, 1995

Thesis Advisors:

Gordon McCormick

Daniel Moran

**Approved for public release; distribution is unlimited.**

19960402 148

DTIC QUALITY INSPECTED 1

REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE			Form Approved OMB No. 0704-0188
<p>Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instruction, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to Washington Headquarters Services, Directorate for Information Operations and Reports, 1215 Jefferson Davis Highway, Suite 1204, Arlington, VA 22202-4302, and to the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reduction Project (0704-0188) Washington DC 20503.</p>			
1. AGENCY USE ONLY ( <i>Leave blank</i> )	2. REPORT DATE December 1995	3. REPORT TYPE AND DATES COVERED Master's Thesis	
4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE  6. AUTHOR(S) Cox, Steven J.	ROLE OF SOF IN PARAMILITARY OPERATIONS		5. FUNDING NUMBERS
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) Naval Postgraduate School Monterey CA 93943-5000			8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER
9. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)			10. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY REPORT NUMBER
11. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES The views expressed in this thesis are those of the author and do not reflect the official policy or position of the Department of Defense or the U.S. Government.			
12a. DISTRIBUTION/AVAILABILITY STATEMENT Approved for public release; distribution is unlimited.		12b. DISTRIBUTION CODE	
<p>13. ABSTRACT (<i>maximum 200 words</i>)  This thesis is a historical study of United States paramilitary operations since World War II. It presents a typology of operational environments based on the level of political constraint imposed upon the National Command Authority. An inductive approach is used to study three cases: OSS operations during WWII; attempts by the United States to overthrow the Castro regime; and efforts by the United States to destabilize the Sandinistas in Nicaragua. From these cases emerge a set of criteria that are useful in defining operational success across a spectrum of paramilitary environments. These criteria can be used to evaluate the possible use of future paramilitary operations, as well as provide benchmarks to judge which organizations, or combination of organizations, would be best suited to perform the paramilitary mission.</p>			
14. SUBJECT TERMS Paramilitary, Jedburghs, Bay of Pigs, Contras, Central Intelligence Agency, Special Operations Forces.			15. NUMBER OF PAGES 81
			16. PRICE CODE
17. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF REPORT Unclassified	18. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF THIS PAGE Unclassified	19. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF ABSTRACT Unclassified	20. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT UL

NSN 7540-01-280-5500

Standard Form 298 (Rev. 2-89)  
Prescribed by ANSI Std. Z39-18 298-102



**Approved for public release; distribution is unlimited.**

**ROLE OF SOF IN PARAMILITARY OPERATIONS**

Steven J. Cox  
Major, United States Air Force  
B.S., United States Air Force Academy, 1983  
M.S., Embry Riddle Aeronautical University, 1994

Submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of

**MASTER OF ARTS IN NATIONAL SECURITY AFFAIRS**

from the

**NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL**  
**December 1995**

Author:

Steven J. Cox

Approved by:

Gordon McCormick, Thesis Advisor

Daniel Moran, Thesis Advisor

Frank Teti, Chairman

Department of National Security Affairs



## **ABSTRACT**

This thesis is a historical study of United States paramilitary operations since World War II. It presents a typology of operational environments based on the level of political constraint imposed upon the National Command Authority. An inductive approach is used to study three cases: OSS operations during WWII; attempts by the United States to overthrow the Castro regime; and efforts by the United States to destabilize the Sandinistas in Nicaragua. From these cases emerge a set of criteria that are useful in defining operational success across a spectrum of paramilitary environments. These criteria can be used to evaluate the possible use of future paramilitary operations, as well as provide benchmarks to judge which organizations, or combination of organizations, would be best suited to perform the paramilitary mission.



## **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

I. INTRODUCTION .....	1
A. METHODOLOGY .....	2
B. APPROACH .....	4
II. WORLD WAR II .....	5
A. GENESIS .....	6
B. JEDBURGHS .....	8
1. History .....	8
2. Objectives .....	9
3. Team Hugh .....	10
a. Mission .....	10
C. SERVICE DETACHMENT UNIT 101 .....	16
1. History .....	16
2. Mission .....	17
D. ANALYSIS .....	20
1. Strategic Criteria .....	20
2. Operational Criteria .....	21
3. Tactical Criteria .....	24
E. SUMMARY .....	25
III. COLD WAR .....	27
A. CUBA .....	27
1. History .....	28
2. Operation Pluto .....	29
B. ANALYSIS .....	34
1. Strategic Criteria .....	34
2. Operational Criteria .....	35

3. Tactical Criteria .....	38
C. SUMMARY .....	38
IV. TYPE C ENVIRONMENT .....	41
A. NICARAGUA .....	41
1. History .....	42
2. Mission .....	47
B. ANALYSIS .....	53
1. Strategic Criteria .....	53
2. Operational Criteria .....	55
3. Tactical Criteria .....	56
C. SUMMARY .....	58
V. CONCLUSIONS .....	61
LIST OF REFERENCES .....	65
INITIAL DISTRIBUTION LIST .....	69

## **I. INTRODUCTION**

This paper is a response to a series of questions proposed by United States Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) concerning the role that special operations forces (SOF) should play in the conduct of paramilitary operations. Specifically, now that the military has a dedicated and revitalized SOF in the form of USSOCOM, would the country be better served by turning some or all paramilitary responsibility over to SOF? If so, what is the proper division of labor between USSOCOM and the intelligence community? Before these questions can be answered, it seems appropriate to take a historical look at our involvement with paramilitary operations. When has the United States resorted to paramilitary action? In which environments has it been successful? When has it failed? From this historical study, it should be possible to glean basic truths concerning the nature of paramilitary operations. The focus of this paper will be to discover those paramilitary criteria that are applicable across the spectrum of operational environments. Once these criteria are understood, we will be in a better position to evaluate and judge which organizations, or combinations of organizations, would be better suited to perform the paramilitary mission.

## A. METHODOLOGY

This paper hypothesizes that there are three conflict environments. Each is characterized by different degrees of political constraint. Political constraint is defined as the limits placed on objectives, as well as the means used to obtain these objectives. The following typology depicts these three distinct types of conflict. (Table 1)

Typology of Conflict			
Type	Characteristics	Political constraints	Examples
Type A	Unlimited Objectives	Low	World War II
	Unlimited Means		
Type B	Unlimited Objectives	Medium	Overthrow of Cuban Government
	Limited Means		Support of Afghanistan Guerrillas
Type C	Limited Objectives	High	Destabilization of Sandinista Government
	Limited Means		Support of Tibetan Guerrillas

Table 1. Conflict Environments.

Type A conflict corresponds with total war. Within this frame of reference, there is minimal domestic and international political restraint. Wars are fought for unlimited objectives using unlimited means. The objective of this type of warfare is typically the complete destruction of a particular regime. Political, economic, and military will has been mobilized to achieve this objective. The state is prepared to spend an unlimited amount of capital to achieve the desired goal. During Type A conflict, because of the lack of restraint, no weapon that contributes to victory is spared. Operations and tactics considered too harsh or politically risky for lesser types of conflict, are readily employed. World War II was the epitome of Type A conflict. The entire country was mobilized to achieve the total destruction of the Nazi's and the defeat of the Japanese. Strategic Air was used to bomb civilian targets such as Dresden, and to fire bomb Tokyo. Ultimately, the United States

dropped two atomic bombs on Japan. The United States also resorted to the use of unconventional warfare. Prior to World War II, the United States did not possess the capability, nor the motivation, to conduct these types of operations. The United States has not engaged in a Type A conflict since World War II. Nuclear proliferation has imposed restraints that make the cost of Type A conflict unrealistic. This launched a new era in warfare for nuclear states that can be described as Type B conflict.

During a Type B conflict, the objective of the intervenor may well be the destruction of a particular regime, however the means used to achieve this goal must be tempered against the possibility of escalation to Type A conflict. Political reality dictates that limits be placed on the means used to achieve an objective. Type B conflicts employ conventional weapons below the nuclear threshold. Typically, the intervenor lacks the political commitment of Type A conflict. Mobilization of economic and military assets will be harder because of the perceived threat reduction. During the Cold War, the United States was not prepared to challenge the Soviet regime directly because of the threat of nuclear escalation. It was committed to the destruction of peripheral regimes that embraced the Soviet Union's ideology. These so called "proxy" wars allowed the United States to engage in Type B warfare without running a serious risk of escalation to Type A conflict.

World War II and the Cold War environments essentially define the modern American paramilitary experience. Each took place within different conflict environments that provided unique opportunities and constraints. Today, with a diminished Russia, there is a conflict environment emerging that can be portrayed as Type C conflict. Below the nuclear threshold, except for China, there is not a country that can seriously challenge the United States militarily. This presents a new political dilemma for the United States. Without a serious military threat, it will become increasingly difficult to justify the use of overwhelming force. Politicians will be further constrained in terms of the means that they will be able to employ to achieve their objectives. Decreased means will translate to a need for decreased objectives.

Type C interprets conflict as limited in nature. The goal is not the complete destruction of a particular regime. Rather, the goal is to achieve objectives at a lower threshold of cost. This type of conflict does not demand as much in terms of political, economic, and military capital as the two preceding types. Objectives can theoretically be secured through the use of limited means with little chance of escalation to the previous forms of conflict.

## B. APPROACH

Our initial case analysis will be drawn from both Type A and Type B environments. Chapter II presents Type A cases that include operations conducted by the American Office of Strategic Services (OSS) in conjunction with their British counterparts of the Special Operations Executive (SOE) during World War II. Specifically, these cases will include the Jedburgh operations in Europe, and Detachment 101 operations in Burma. These cases were chosen for their diversity of location, apparent success, and because they were both modern examples that predated the Cold War. Type B conflict is illustrated in Chapter III by the United States' most infamous paramilitary operation; the support of Cuban exile forces in their attempt to overthrow Fidel Castro. From these case studies emerges a set of refined criteria that can be used to evaluate future Type C operations. In Chapter IV these criteria are tested against the paramilitary efforts to destabilize the Sandinista regime. Chapter V draws conclusions about the criteria and makes recommendations for further study.

## II. WORLD WAR II

World War II was unique period in American history. It created the environment that made it imperative for the United States to step up to its responsibilities as a world power. The United States had global interests that were being challenged and WW II provided the impetus to assert its power to resolve these challenges. The threats to our interests are still with us today, but the context is different. World War II was a time of unlimited means. There was minimal restraint on the actions that America could take on behalf of its interests.<sup>1</sup> A public consensus that the Allies must prevail, drove policy makers and military leaders to contemplate all options that might secure victory.

It is important to look at the WWII cases in this context because it illustrates why WWII was really the first foray by the United States into the world of paramilitary operations since the Revolutionary War. Since that time there was no motivation to use paramilitary forces. For most military leaders, the use of saboteurs and guerrilla fighters was alien. Those that could contemplate their use, viewed them as generally unreliable, ill-disciplined, and not quite above board. This helps explain why the Office of Strategic Services (OSS) and its operations were limited in scale when compared with the British program. Traditionally a naval power, the British have always resisted a large land component. Facing a potentially lethal threat from the continent for the second time in two decades, Britain had learned to rely on an extensive unconventional capability embodied in the Special Operations Executive (SOE). Despite the late start and limited size, the OSS's programs were a beginning. By examining the following cases in light of the total war context, conclusions about paramilitary operations in this environment can begin to be understood. From the lessons

---

<sup>1</sup>Actions such as the bombing of Dresden, the fire bombing of Tokyo, and the dropping of two atomic bombs show the level of violence that the United States was willing to inflict to achieve its ends.

learned, it is possible to establish criteria for the conduct of paramilitary operations in a total war scenario.

#### A. GENESIS

France fell to the Germans in 1940, and it looked as if Hitler would threaten England next. American political leaders knew that something must be done to prevent the Nazi's from becoming the dominant power on the Continent but prior to Pearl Harbor, isolationism was the prevailing sentiment of the American public. Roosevelt was up for reelection in November of 1940, and was reluctant to jeopardize his political chances by pushing an interventionist policy too strongly. News from England continued to deteriorate. Joseph P. Kennedy, American ambassador to London, thought the British were finished. He broadcast his opinions openly in London, sent home defeatist cables, and suggested that America think about living with a Europe dominated by Hitler. (Lankford 1991, p. 7) In an effort to get a candid, and possibly alternative assessment, Secretary of the Navy Knox recommended that the President send "Wild Bill Donovan", a highly decorated World War I veteran, successful businessman, and former public official, to England to study the methods and effects of German activities in Europe. In addition, Roosevelt wanted Donovan to observe how the British were standing up at a time when their fortunes were at a low ebb and they stood alone against Germany. (Roosevelt 1976, p. 5) In July of 1940, Donovan spent three weeks in London and reported to FDR upon his return that Kennedy was wrong. Britain would hold out but that it could not win without American aid. (Lankford 1991, p. 7)

In December of 1940 Roosevelt again dispatched Donovan to Europe to assess the strategic implications of the German efforts in the Mediterranean area. During the next three months, Donovan visited Gibraltar, Malta, Egypt, Greece, Bulgaria, Yugoslavia, Turkey, Cyprus, Palestine, Iraq, Spain and Portugal. (Roosevelt 1976, p. 6) Donovan's debriefing to the President emphasized three major points: First the gravity of the shipping problem; the dangers and opportunities which the situation in Northwest Africa represented for the

United States; and finally, the extraordinary importance of psychological and political elements in the war and the necessity of making the most of these elements in planning and executing any national policies. (Roosevelt 1976, p. 6) Donovan reported that the Germans were making the fullest use of psychological warfare, of subversion and sabotage, and of special intelligence. As the German unconventional war machine pressed on, neither America or Britain was fighting this new and important type of war on more than the smallest scale. Donovan urged upon the President the necessity for preparation in the field of irregular and unorthodox warfare. (Roosevelt, 1976, p. 7)

Through his close observations of the British system, Donovan saw the possibilities of an American covert intelligence organization. He lobbied for creation of a central agency charged with collecting intelligence. Despite intense bureaucratic infighting between the intelligence organizations of the Army, Navy, and Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), Donovan is partially successful. On July 11, 1941, Roosevelt created by executive order the office of the Coordinator of Information (COI). Before this organization could gain a foot hold, it was reorganized when America entered the war after the Japanese attack at Pearl Harbor.

On June 13, 1942, Roosevelt reincarnated the COI as the Office of Strategic Services with Donovan at the helm, directly under the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS). The OSS grew to five major branches: Secret Intelligence (SI), Research and Analysis (R&A), Counterespionage (X-2), Special Operations (SO), and Morale Operations (MO). (Lankford 1991, p. 11) During World War II the OSS functioned globally. There were major commands in the Mediterranean, northern Europe, Burma, and China. The SO branch was responsible for paramilitary operations.

It was the British Special Operations Executive (SOE) that provided the model for America's early paramilitary activity. The British mission was to create and foster the spirit of resistance in Nazi occupied countries. Once a suitable climate of opinion had been set up, they established a nucleus of trained men who could assist as a 'fifth column' in the liberation

of the country concerned.(Foot 1966, pp. 11-12) In Europe, networks of resistance movements were already operating to oppose German occupation. Agents of the SOE and the OSS provided arms and advice to these small guerrilla units. (Prados 1986, p. 15) The following case studies are examples of the OSS's paramilitary efforts.

## B. JEDBURGHS

### 1. History

In the spring of 1942 Major General Gubbins, then head of the SOE London Group, in a note to the Chief of the SOE Security Section wrote:

A project is under consideration for the dropping behind of the enemy lines, in cooperation with an Allied invasion of the Continent, of small parties of officers and men to raise and arm the civilian population to carry out guerrilla activities against the enemy's lines of communications. These men are to be recruited and trained by SOE. It is requested that jumpers or some other appropriate code name be allotted to [these] personnel. (Mendelsohn 1989, p. i)

The code name allocated was "Jedburghs."<sup>2</sup> The Jedburgh program would become one of Americas first paramilitary operations of the modern era. Jedburghs was a combined operation of the fledgling American OSS, their British mentors of the Special Operations Executive (SOE), and French counterparts of the Bureau Central de Renseignements et Action (BCRA). The Jedburgh force was composed of approximately 350 officers and enlisted men of the combined services. This included operational as well as support personnel. The men were divided into 90 three man teams consisting of two officers and one enlisted radio operator. The original American OSS contingent included 53 officers and 40 enlisted men. (Bank 1986, p. 14)

---

<sup>2</sup>The name "Jedburgh" was derived from the twelfth century border wars between the Scots and the British invaders in the Jedburgh area of Scotland where a local Scottish group conducted guerrilla warfare.

## **2. Objectives**

The Jedburgh's mission was to infiltrate, primarily by parachute, into occupied France, Belgium, and Holland prior to D-day and to provide a strategic reserve for creating and controlling offensive action behind the enemy lines on and after D-day where existing communications, leadership, organization, or supplies were inadequate.

Their principle function was to liaison with resistance groups. Jedburgh teams were sent only to areas where there were actual or potential resistance elements, well behind the German front lines (at least 40 miles). The Jedburghs were not meant to foment resistance, but rather to harness the potential and focus it in a manner that would serve Allied purposes. The idea was to create a capable indigenous guerrilla force that would lie concealed until it could launch a coordinated guerrilla attack against German forces in conjunction with the D-day invasion and subsequent operations by Allied conventional forces. Specific tasks envisioned by Allied commanders included:

- a. Attacks on railway tracks and installations: round houses, turntables, and signals.
- b. Attacks on enemy road vehicles.
- c. Misdirecting, delaying and dislocating Panzer Division movements.
- d. Destruction of telecommunications.
- e. Liquidation of enemy Commanders and Staff, through attacks on staff cars, small administrative detachments, and rear installations.
- f. Interference with enemy supplies.
- g. Sabotage of enemy aircraft. Attacks on planes, supplies and pilots off duty
- h. Destruction of electric power nodes used for military purposes.
- i. Demolition of minor bridges, or premature demolition of major bridges already prepared by the enemy.
- j. Preservation of vital points for later use by Allied armies (i.e., preventing final enemy demolition of bridges, ports, etc.)

They strove to achieve these ends by organizing French resistance groups for guerrilla activity. This included equipping resistance groups with weapons and supplies and providing instruction in the use of those arms and supplies. Jedburghs provided tactical and strategic command and control capability by supplying radios and communications with Allied Headquarters. They also furnished technical advice and assisted in operations against the enemy. When needed, they actually led resistance groups in guerrilla actions.

### **3. Team Hugh**

The following account of Jedburgh team Hugh was derived from their after action reports and radio logs as described in the War Diary of the London Special Operations Branch of the OSS. (Mendelsohn 1989, pp. 17-25, 64-106)

#### *a. Mission*

The first of ninety-three Jedburgh teams to be infiltrated behind German lines was team Hugh. Team Hugh was dispatched from London on the night of 5 June, 1944 to the Chateauroux area in the Department of Indre, France. Its immediate mission was to contact resistance groups and assist advanced SAS elements establish a base from which raids could be carried out against enemy lines of communications (LOC). At the same time they were expected to commence immediate attacks against the Toulouse railway to prevent German reinforcements from leaving Chateauroux. Next, they were to evaluate the state of resistance elements in the area in terms of personnel, leadership, arms, and then report back to Special Forces Headquarters (SFHQ).<sup>3</sup> Upon confirmation from SFHQ, they would organize, train, and equip resistance groups to conduct unconventional warfare against the German occupation forces.

The team along with two SAS officers, was most likely infiltrated by an RAF Stirling bomber. The bomber would be sent along with a scheduled strike package and then after crossing into France, it would feign a malfunction and turn back toward England.

---

<sup>3</sup>SFHQ was a combined organization (British/American) to conduct unconventional warfare.

Germans were conditioned to seeing stray bombers limping home and usually no suspicions were raised. Once on a westerly heading, the team would be parachuted to a waiting reception committee made up of agents and partisans.

Team Hugh was met by a French intelligence agent and a reception committee of five indigenous personnel. The next day, Hugh met with chief of the "Armée Secrète" (AS) of Indre - code named Surcouf, as well as a British agent named Samuel who was running a local intelligence network. It was determined that Indre was not the most efficient area for the SAS to concentrate their efforts. At the time there was little German activity and it was felt there would be more targets in the region of Poitiers. It was decided that the main body of the SAS contingent should be dropped near Aigurande. Team Hugh arranged and supervised reception committees for the SAS during the nights of 8 and 9 June. Then they turned the SAS over to a resistance group near Lussac-les Chateaux, where they would be in contact with Samuel, and in a safe position to launch operations against German targets travelling between Bordeaux and Poitiers. Having completed their first mission, they turned to the much larger task of organizing and arming the resistance in the Indre area.

The effects of Operation OVERLORD and the opening of a second front made it almost impossible to stop the influx of new recruits ready to take the fight to the Germans. Radio traffic from Team Hugh on 8 June, two days after D-day, clearly indicates that the French were rallying to the cause.

Impossible to limit the numbers joining the resistance owing to spontaneous uprising. Urgently require Jedburgh teams, arms and materials.

By mid-June the strength of the resistance in the department of Indre had increased to about 3,000 men of whom roughly half were armed. Unfortunately many of these men were untrained, lacked leaders, and were not sure of themselves. Depending on their political persuasion, these men flocked to one of the many resistance groups that had formed to liberate France. The Jedburghs acted as a controlling general staff. They worked with rival

organizations such as: the Organization de la Résistance dans l'Armée (ORA), composed mainly of members of the Giraudist groups and the old Armée d' Armistice; Forces Françaises de l'interieur (FFI), which was the Gaullist Resistance known as French Forces of the Interior; and the Francs-tireurs et partisans (FTP), which was the military wing of the French Communist Party; to consolidate command and control, and form a united guerrilla front against the Germans.

Two day conference at our H.Q. with DMR representative has been successful. Plan of action decided. Training center for cadres agreed. Pupils from F.F.I., F.T.P. arriving tomorrow. All keen on Jedburgh teams. F.T.P. rather sticky."<sup>4</sup>

The rather sticky attitude of the FTP might be explained by the fact that Communists had objectives that conflicted with the Western ambitions for post-war France. The FTP was a reluctant ally. Foot points out that prior to the German invasion of Russia, a small core of disciplined Stalinists who ran the French Communist Party, had welcomed the German occupation forces as allies of the Soviet Union. They had called for a National Front to embrace all French Parties and assert a neutral position between Germany and England. Once Germany attacked eastward, the communist turned the organization into an anti-German Force. (Foot 1966, pp. 159-160) This organization had control over parts of the French proletariat with the discipline and clandestine experience to make life hard for the Germans in the main industrial areas of Paris, Lyons, and the northeast through the FTP. From 1941 to 1944 the FTP had steadily gained stature in areas of the countryside where the traditions of 1789 still favored voting for the extreme left. The Indre area was one of heavy communist sympathy. Nevertheless, the communists lacked arms and ammunition and were thus forced to acquiesce to certain demands of SOE agents and Team Hugh in order to acquire these materials.

---

<sup>4</sup>Team Hugh radio message to SFHQ, 26 June 1944.

As a result of these concessions, the resistance in the Indre area of operations was organized into three categories. First, all troops would be incorporated into the Maquis under the command of Surcouf (FFI). The Maquis would be formed into companies and battalions. Colonel Martel (ORA) would command the mobile troops, while the static elements would continue to be led by the "Chefs de Secteur." A third category of resistance envisioned individuals who would carry out their normal work, but would have personal arms hidden near their homes. These men could be called upon when necessary.

Having established a command and control structure, it became possible to begin organizing, instructing, and advising the different groups. By the middle of July, with the help of extensive parachute operations, the resistance in Indre had five mobile battalions in addition to well organized Maquis in every sector. Up until this time there had been no large scale confrontation with the Germans despite an extensive sabotage campaign. There were five hundred railway cuts from 6 June through 6 July in Indre alone.

The situation changed on 8 July when the Maquis in the Vienne were attacked by a German repression column of about 2000 SS. This attack was staged in conjunction with a raid on SAS group "Bullbasket." Apparently the SAS group had been neglecting their security obligations by parading around the country in Jeeps. This alerted the Germans to the Allied presence. The attack killed more than 20 and sent the Maquis on the run. As the Maquis retreated, their security precautions were also marginal and as a result, they led the Germans to Team Hugh. Fortunately, there was enough warning for Hugh and the resistance to disperse and avoid a catastrophe.

After this near miss, Team Hugh decided to slow down the guerrilla activity and concentrate on security while at the same time expanding the guerrilla force. Throughout the remainder of July, Team Hugh inculcated a spirit of discipline and instituted training programs, while at the same time arming over 6,000 partisans. In the safer areas they turned the Maquis into infantry training depots who served as reinforcements for the mobile battalions. This increased consolidation began to pay off. During the last days of

July, Team Hugh noted the first concentrations of enemy troops to the south and west of the Indre department. This gave them an indication of a probable general withdrawal. As German circulation in the north and northeast of the department became more intensified, the order was given for restrained guerrilla activity. Most of the action dealt with cars from Brittany and Nantes containing German personnel who had bad route itineraries, and had not made provision against Maquis attack. In the early stages of withdrawal, the Germans feared air attack more than they did the Maquis. As a result, they often withdrew in small inconsequential numbers. Guerrilla activity forced the Germans to travel in convoys. This allowed Hugh and other Jedburgh teams to call in air strikes against them. By the end of July, the Germans showed a healthy respect for the resistance in Indre. They continually tried to skirt the area enroute to Bordeaux, La Rochelle and Nantes.

By mid August, the strength of armed and organized resistance groups in the Indre-et-Loire area under the direct control of Team Hugh had increased to between eight and ten thousand. The number of guerrillas was reaching the maximum that could operate as Maquis in the surrounding area without coming out into the open. Unfortunately there was very little air support in August of 1944 because of higher priority missions.

At this same time, Team Hugh received intelligence that a SS party of 200 men was coming from Poitiers with the intention of blowing up the dam at Eguzon. This was the most important source of hydroelectric power in France. Once destroyed, it would take a long time to replace. Team Hugh surrounded the dam with a thousand FTP and requested assistance from London. They could not take control of the dam and electric facility because it was occupied by 300 Wehrmacht. In response to the Jedburgh request, London sent an Operations Group (OG) of thirty American airborne troops. Obviously the thirty paratroopers were not going to make a difference. Team Hugh decided to parade them around the country to create the illusion that there was at least a brigade of Allied paratroopers. The psyop had the required effect. The Wehrmacht garrison, who were heavily armed, withdrew without a fight.

Numerous small scale guerrilla attacks continued throughout August and September. By mid-August it was clear that the Germans were in full retreat. On 21 August the German garrison evacuated Chateauroux towards the east and were attacked by the Maquis who were lying in ambush. Team Hugh reported over 200 enemy killed and 100 captured vehicles compared with very slight losses.

The mass retreat from the southwest and west forced the Germans to use every line of retreat that they could. Team Hugh mobilized the resistance to restrict the number of escape options used by the Germans. This was done by attacking all the known escape routes and forcing the enemy to concentrate in larger convoys along fewer routes. These fewer routes were more vulnerable to Allied air attack, and could be attacked by guerrilla mobile troops.

Originally, German columns were moving along an axis from Loches to Nouans enroute to the Cher valley. These columns were caught in ambush and punished by the resistance until the end of August. Dismayed at their losses, the enemy changed their main axis to Saint Flovier to Chatillon. This had the same result and the Germans were forced to try Pleumartin to Preuilly, and finally Tournon to Mezieres. The resistance was having the desired effect. On the night of 29 August a total of 123 men comprised of a Jedburgh team, 2 OG's and sixty Maquis held up a column of 10,000 Germans for over six hours, inflicting severe losses and losing only two.

By early September, the enemy abandoned their northern itineraries for the single axis of escape defined by Preuilly-Mezieres-Vendoeuvres-Chateauroux. Team Hugh coordinated resistance attacks on the fleeing columns and called in very successful air attacks on these columns. The Germans and the Resistance were overrun by the American 83rd Division on 9 September as a final lame German column of 20,000 men passed by Chateauroux. Team Hugh's mission was complete and they turned themselves in to the Allies and were passed back to SFHQ.

## C. SERVICE DETACHMENT UNIT 101

### 1. History

When Japan first invaded China in 1937, they took control of all China's ports and major cities except for those in the deep interior. This meant that all supplies to China had to go by way of the "Burma Road." Supplies that traveled the Burma Road arrived by sea at the port of Rangoon. They are then shipped via rail or barge along the Irrawaddy River to Mandalay, then by rail over the mountains to Lashio. From there, they traveled by truck along cart paths and trails to Kunming, China. This is one of the oldest known trade routes. Marco Polo followed this path on his return from Cathay.

In 1942 the Japanese invaded Burma. They took control of Rangoon and struck north to Mandalay. One Japanese column then turned west and occupied Akyab, while another column occupied Kalewa in central Burma. A third column struck north and east to Lashio. This third column then split into two. Half pushed toward China along the Burma road until it reached a suitable defensive position; the other made its way north to Myitkyina. Using Myitkyina as their base, the Japanese established a perimeter of troops along the Indian border and then east, between China to the north and Burma, Thailand, and Indochina to the south. Essentially all ground lines of Allied supply to China were cut off. The Allies were forced to use airlift to fly the "Hump" across the Himalayas from Ledo in India to Kunming. Despite the valiant efforts of Chennault's 14th Air Force Flying Tigers, General Stilwell felt the key to victory in the China- Burma-India (CBI) theater was to reestablish a land link with China. His plan called for three Chinese divisions (the 22nd, 30th, and 38th) to drive the Japanese 18th division east across northern Burma. As they did this, engineers would build an all-weather road to hook up with the old Burma road at Lashio, south of Myitkyina. From Lashio, supplies would flow into China via the traditional route. Essential to this plan was the capture of the town of Myitkyina and the adjacent airport.

Originally conceived by Donovan as an intelligence organization, Detachment 101 ran into problems in the Pacific theater. Stilwell was a passionate admirer of the infantry

soldier. He was just as fervently prejudiced against the "irregular" military activity proposed by the OSS. Donovan teamed up with Chennault, who needed an intelligence organization deep in enemy territory to provide targets for his bombing campaign, to pressure Stilwell to relent. Rounds of bureaucratic infighting ensued, and reluctantly Stilwell allowed Detachment 101 to form along the lines of a paramilitary force similar in function to the Jedburghs. On giving the order authorizing Detachment 101, General Stilwell is quoted as saying that he didn't want to hear anything more about the unit until he began hearing booms from behind the Japanese lines. In retribution for bureaucratic loss to Donovan and Chennault, Stilwell sent the unit to India where they had little chance for action. This situation did not last for long because Stilwell was forced to press 101 into action to accomplish his plan to open the Ledo road.

## **2. Mission**

Detachment 101's mission was to infiltrate behind Japanese lines, establish an intelligence network to scout the Myitkyina area, organize a resistance movement, and then conduct unconventional warfare against the enemy. Eventually their mission included leading indigenous columns in direct action against the Japanese.

The OSS set up a training camp in India at a British owned tea plantation in the town of Nazira. There 11 officers and 9 enlisted men of the OSS trained and prepared for their first attempts at establishing a network of agents and guerrillas. This first try involved flying an eight-man team into Fort Hertz in Burma. Fort Hertz was a lone British outpost with an airfield in northern Burma. The Japanese had not bothered to attack it since their attention was focused west toward India. From Fort Hertz, the Detachment 101 team patrolled the jungle probing for soft spots in the Japanese lines. The Japanese provided no opening so the group decided to return to Fort Hertz and try to infiltrate by air. The group parachuted deep into Burma about 250 miles south of Fort Hertz and 100 miles south of Myitkyina. Their intention was to scout the area and blow up bridges and other parts of the rail line from Myitkyina south. They were partially successful before the Japanese discovered them and

sent them running. What made the escape possible for some of the men was the fact that they put themselves in the care of Kachin villagers. The Kachins guided them along little known trails and eventually got the team back to Fort Hertz. It took the group three months and they covered over a thousand miles.

The Kachin tribesmen are decedents of Mongolians from the Himalayas in the border area between Tibet and China. For centuries they have lived in the mountainous area of Northern Burma. As a people, the Kachins had no love for the Burmese, Japanese, or British for that matter. The Kachins are a primitive people and as such they were responsive to the appeals of Christian missionaries. It just so happened that two Irish-Catholic missionaries escaped from Myitkynia shortly after the Japanese attacked and had made their way to Fort Hertz where they joined Detachment 101. These two, along with a surgeon who had previously practiced in Burma and was now part of the eclectic Detachment, were invaluable in enlisting the Kachin natives from the surrounding mountain tribes and allowing Detachment 101 to recultivate the North Kachin Levy (NKL) guerrilla movement that had previously been supported by the British.

A Kachin would be trained as a radio operator and then parachuted into an area where he was familiar with the local people. After he prepared the village, he would radio back and an American lieutenant would be dropped in. The two of them would recruit, equip, and train a band of Kachin guerrillas with weapons and tactics. After training, the guerrilla group would be sent to scout out the enemy and his installations. This information would be passed back and in many cases was used as reconnaissance for air strikes by the 14th Air Force. The intelligence network was also used to rescue downed airman. Word was passed to Kachin villages to look out for crews and pass them on to the nearest 101 guerrilla group. Somewhere between 25 and 35 percent (a total of 425) of the downed crew members were rescued by Detachment 101.

Early in the war, Detachment 101 units tried to avoid combat engagements with the enemy. Guerrilla groups would lay in ambushes on the trails leading to their camps as a

defense and concentrate on intelligence. As the war wore on, the Kachin Ranger trained and led by the OSS detachment, found themselves increasingly acting as pathfinders, scouts, and flank protection for more conventional units. On such unit was the 5307th Provisional Regiment, which became known as Merrill's Marauders. The unit code name was GALAHAD.

The Marauders were a commando force modeled after the British "Chindits". They were designed to travel light and conduct fast-moving , slashing attacks. Stilwell planned to use the GALAHAD force in conjunction with the three American led Chinese divisions to accomplish his Burma campaign. Early in the campaign, a battalion of the Marauders was cut off from the main body and surrounded by the Japanese. The enemy had encircled the force and was attempting to close the noose. Daily the trapped Marauders were resupplied by 14 Air Force planes but it was just a matter of time before the Japanese would overrun them. It was near the end of the second week that a band of Kachin Rangers known as the "Lightning Force" attacked the Japanese from the rear. This band of Kachin natives led by an American Lieutenant Tilly, ambushed the Japanese again and again. When the Japanese tried to strike back, they found nothing. The Kachins would melt back into the jungle only to reappear with a more savage attack. These attacks by the Lightning Force allowed the battalion of Marauders to slip through the Japanese lines and escape back to the main column.

After two major campaigns during GALAHAD's first four months in the jungle, they had been decimated by casualties, disease, and fatigue. Their ranks had been thinned by half. Ordinarily they should have been relieved but Stilwell had one last task for them. They would be combined with the three Chinese divisions sent to capture the town of Myitkyina. Det 101's Kachin rangers would act as scouts and make up the difference in GALAHAD's thinned ranks. The combined force of the Marauders, Chindits, 4000 Chinese, and several hundred Kachin Rangers set off across the 6000 ft Kuman mountains and three weeks later

emerged to surprise the Japanese at Myitkyina. They retook the town and airfield with little difficulty.

Myitkyina would eventually fall back into Japanese hands but this should not obscure the contribution of Detachment 101. By the end of the war, there were more than 500 Americans, with organized guerrilla bands of 8,500 native Kachins. In the war's last stages, which saw retreat of the Japanese 56th Division, the Kachin guerrillas preyed upon enemy columns, killing and wounding thousands. Had the Chinese force moving down from Yünnan lived up to tactical expectations, the joint effort could have annihilated the Japanese division. As it turned out the Chinese force was terribly slow to link up with the Kachins and the decisive battle never came to pass. Nevertheless the Kachin field force did help trap two powerful Japanese divisions during the Allies' final offensives in Burma. It was a major achievement for the OSS. Detachment 101 succeeded in mobilizing a paramilitary force nearly thirty times its size and then used that force to execute highly complex and successful military missions.

#### **D. ANALYSIS**

If we consider the preceding case studies successful, then it is important to determine why they were successful. To do this, criteria for evaluation must be established. After examining the above cases, common characteristics begin to emerge. These criteria break out into three different levels of analysis; strategic, operational, and tactical.

##### **1. Strategic Criteria**

Strategic criteria define the political, military and economic environment for the intervenor. Are the conditions right for an intervening force to pursue a paramilitary option? For the two preceding cases, the environment was characterized by total war. This meant that there was little restraint on politicians or military leaders to pursue a paramilitary option. The war provided a strategic unity of purpose. Defeat of the Nazi's and the liberation of France, as well as the defeat of the Japanese military, provided over arching goals that could

be seen and understood by everyone involved in the respective efforts. The American public, as well as each soldier, knew and understood the strategic goal.

The war also placed American society in an environment that restricted their usual freedoms. Information was withheld from the general public in the name of national security. Curtailment of information during total war was generally accepted by the public because they understood the importance of the strategic goals, and could rationalize the need for security versus the need for public information. Typically, paramilitary operations are designed to be covert and clandestine in nature. In both the WWII case studies, there were elaborate measures taken to ensure that the operations were kept secret from the public as well as the enemy. An open society has a natural aversion to operations that are shielded from public scrutiny. Despite this antagonism, during WWII the strategic goals outweighed any hesitancy that might have existed by politicians to employ covert strategies.

This aversion of covert warfare also carries over into the military. A democracy's military is an extension of that society's values. Accordingly, there was tremendous doubt in the minds of more traditional military leaders as to the need for paramilitary forces. Bureaucratic infighting and traditional turf battles can explain much of the resistance, but when contemplating the use of paramilitary capability, policy makers and military leaders alike, must take into account the basic contradictions that are posed for an open society. Again, it was fixation on the strategic goal that allowed leaders such as Generals Patton and Stilwell, not only to contemplate the use of irregular warfare, but to authorize its use. Both these men had little faith in guerrilla warfare, but being pressed to achieve the strategic objectives, they came to see that paramilitary operations could contribute to the attainment of those goals.

## **2. Operational Criteria**

Operational criteria describe the organizational potential of the protégé. They also define which paramilitary operations are possible given the limitations of the operational environment. There must be an environment that provides sufficient organizational space

to mobilize popular support. Within the framework of World War II there were ideal conditions to mobilize a paramilitary force. Aside from the fact that both Germany and Japan aggressively invaded and occupied their neighbors territory, atrocities committed by both regimes provided powerful incentive for the creation of resistance groups. The Germans and the Japanese also adopted a policy that treated resistance fighters and their supporters as criminals. This led to further increases in the mobilization potential.

The governments of France and Burma generally conceded to the demands of the respective occupation forces. The French Vichy government actually helped German forces ferret out suspected guerrilla organizations. By abandoning the needs of the French people, the Vichy government gave the populace few operational alternatives. With no formal instrument to resist the demands of the German occupation forces, Frenchmen were left with one of two choices; accept the occupation or resist. For many the choice was to fight.

Structural factors played into the situation in Burma. The Kachins, as described earlier, immigrated from the Tibetan region, and were an ethnic minority in Burma. This provided the Kachins with a natural mobilization potential. The invasion by the Japanese was seen as clear threat and served to ripen that potential. Life under the xenophobic Japanese was seen as intolerable. These fears were confirmed by the brutal Japanese treatment of those unfortunate enough to be captured by them.

In both of the WWII case studies the local populace had the incentive to resist. They were permissive environments in terms of mobilization potential. Their enemy was our enemy. This is a very important point. It would be very difficult to mount a paramilitary campaign in an area that lacked natural mobilization potential.

Closely related to the strategic unity of purpose idea is that of operational vision. Operational vision assumes that the minimum or maximum objectives of the participants can be achieved by pursuing a common operational strategy. In other words, do all the players basically agree that they will achieve their purpose by the proposed actions? The need for a common operational vision is especially important in paramilitary activities because of the

diverse nature of the actors involved. It must be remembered that not everyone has the same motivation.

The case of the French resistance is an excellent example. Multiple and diverse French political factions such as the ORA, FFI, and FTP were involved in the resistance. Each had their own ideas for France's political future after the war. They were united by the fact that they could not achieve their individual objectives until the Germans were defeated and France liberated. The operational environment in the Pacific theater was similar. Chinese nationalist and communist were at odds with each other over the eventual political landscape. Chinese communist were already mobilizing their guerrilla potential. With the Japanese invasion of 1937, a stronger threat was introduced and the rival factions temporarily set aside their differences in order to pursue a common strategic objective through the use of a parallel operational vision. Both the Chinese nationalist and communist believed that the ejection of the Japanese occupation forces was necessary before they could achieve their ultimate political destiny.

In the case of World War II, the operational vision was quite simple for the Allies. This vision manifest itself in strategic air and ground campaigns designed to kill as many Germans and Japanese as possible. Allied armies and OSS organized resistance fighters were united in this operational vision. What made the Jedburgh and Detachment 101 programs so successful was that they did not have to create the operational vision, all they had to do was facilitate it at the unconventional level.

The total war scenario also dictated that paramilitary operations would be designed to achieve limited objectives. The nature of total war demands that it be fought for ultimate objectives. By definition, ends of this magnitude will be defended with the full weight of an adversaries capabilities. Paramilitary forces are not designed or equipped to be the main coercive force in this scenario. At no time did the Allies or the guerrillas, believe that paramilitary operations would achieve strategic goals by themselves. In both WWII

operations, the goal of the OSS was to mobilize a force multiplier to aid ongoing, or follow on, conventional operations.

### **3. Tactical Criteria**

These criteria characterize the physical capability of the paramilitary force to mount and sustain effective operations. The nature of paramilitary operations dictates that force must have an efficient logistical system. Infiltration, exfiltration, and resupply are the life lines of paramilitary forces. Depending on the scope of the operation, it may be possible to live off the land, however during WWII this was impossible. Although the actual OSS teams were small, the numbers of guerrillas organized by the Jedburghs and Detachment 101 necessitated the need for a massive logistics effort to support them. Because resistance or insurgent groups must operate in a clandestine manner, they are limited logistically. The large amounts of weapons and supplies necessary to sustain the force cannot have a visible or static infrastructure. This means that a paramilitary force must have a mobile and obscured system for resupply. The Jedburghs had special components of the British and American Air Forces at their disposal for the purposes of infiltration and resupply. The Kachin rangers were resupplied almost exclusively by the Chennault's 14th Air Force. Clandestine and covert logistics can be a complicated process. It takes specially trained flight crews and very often modified aircraft or naval vessels. Fortunately, these were available during World War II

A second tactical criteria delineates a need for the ability to function in a security environment. Because the paramilitary force is the weaker force, it must remain hidden from the adversary until it reaches a point where it has the tactical advantage. The dilemma that develops from this need for security poses a problem for all paramilitary organizations. As the organization grows in numbers and strength, it becomes more visible, and more vulnerable to attack. Team Hugh was aware of this as the Maquis' numbers swelled in August of 1944, and word had not come yet from London to unleash the Resistance forces. It is also important to note that not just the intervenor must maintain security, but all of the

peripheral organizations that it deals with must be able to function equally well in the security environment. This includes support agencies as well as protégé forces. Once any part of an organization that depends on obscurity becomes visible, conventional forces will apply their superior strength and destroy it. We saw this when Team Hugh was compromised by poor security precautions on the part of SAS force "Bullbasket" and the subsequent mistakes by the Maquis.

#### **E. SUMMARY**

In this chapter, two cases were examined that are representative of America's paramilitary experience within the context of total war. These cases provided three levels of analysis to look at the nature of paramilitary operations. These include the strategic, operational, and tactical levels. At each level, criteria were evident that can be used to measure the effectiveness of a paramilitary program at that particular level of analysis. These criteria for paramilitary operations in the total war context are as follows:

Strategic:

- (1) Presence of a clear and identifiable strategic goal that serves to focus effort and provides a unity of purpose for the participating parties involved.

Operational:

- (2) Existence of a permissive environment in which there is organizational space to mobilize popular support.
- (3) A common or parallel operational vision that allows all participant to achieve their minimum or maximum objectives.
- (4) Operations are designed to achieve limited ends.

Tactical:

- (5) Sufficient logistical support exists to support the planned paramilitary operations.
- (6) The intervening paramilitary force, as well as the protégé force is able to function in a security environment.

The following chapter will study paramilitary operations conducted against Cuba during the Cold War. It will make an effort to determine if the above criteria still apply in an environment characterized by the attainment of unlimited objectives by the use of limited means.

### **III. COLD WAR**

On June 18, 1948, six days prior to the Soviets blockade of Berlin, the NSC promulgated NSC 10/2 which expanded the CIA's authority to conduct covert action.

. . . As used in this directive, "covert operations" are understood to be all activities (except as noted herein) which are conducted or sponsored by this Government against hostile foreign states or groups or in support of friendly foreign states or groups but which are so planned and executed that any US Government responsibility for them is not evident to unauthorized persons and that if uncovered the US Government can plausibly disclaim any responsibility for them. Specifically, such operations shall include any covert activities related to: propaganda; economic warfare; preventive direct action, including sabotage, anti-sabotage, demolition and evacuation measures; subversion against hostile states, *including assistance to underground resistance movements, guerrillas and refugee liberation groups, and support of anti-communist elements in threatened countries of the free world.* [italics added] Such operations shall not include armed conflict by recognized military forces, espionage, counter-espionage, and cover and deception for military operations. . . .<sup>5</sup>

Eisenhower built upon this further when he signed NSC-5412/2.<sup>6</sup> This provided the CIA with the broadest possible charter with regard to covert activity. NSC 10/2 and NSC 5412/2 were the foundation upon which much of the CIA's paramilitary activity throughout the Cold War was based.

#### **A. CUBA**

After more than thirty years, the paramilitary operation designed to overthrow Castro's regime still haunts the United States. The failure of OPERATION PLUTO represents the most visible failure of an American foreign policy that included paramilitary options. A thorough review of this case study's background and operational implications is essential to understand paramilitary operations in a Type B conflict environment.

---

<sup>5</sup>NSC 10/2, 18 Jun 1948.

<sup>6</sup>NSC 5412/2, 28 Dec 1955.

## **1. History**

American intervention in Cuba began in February 1898, when the U.S.S. Maine was mysteriously blown up in Havana Harbor. The American public was shocked, and in a fit of nationalistic outburst insisted on an end to Spanish rule in Cuba. On 11 April the United States declared war on Spain. The Cuban War for Independence, which began in 1895, ended four months after the Americans formally entered the war. Following the war, the United States refused to annex Cuba as Spain had requested.<sup>7</sup> Instead, the Treaty of Paris provided that the United States should act as a trustee of the island, assuming responsibility "for the protection of life and property," and that on the termination of American occupancy, the new government should assume the same obligations. In 1901 Congress passed the Platt Amendment which had a lasting effect on American and Cuban relations. Among other things, the Platt Amendment provided that Cuba, "consents that the United States may exercise the right to intervene for the preservation of Cuban independence, the maintenance of a government adequate for the protection of life, property and individual liberty. . . ." (Lazo 1968, p. 50-2) This amendment was originally added to the Cuban Constitution as an annex and then later its provisions were incorporated into a treaty between the two countries. In essence it was the price of American intervention. For years the Platt Amendment provided benefits for both countries. Guantanamo provided the United States with a strategic port to project power throughout the Caribbean in keeping with the Monroe Doctrine. For Cuba, the Amendment insured a flow of American capital that made economic development possible. The Platt Amendment was eventually repealed in 1934, but it had set a strong precedent for American involvement in Cuba.

Fidel Castro came to power on Jan 1, 1959. Shortly after the takeover he made a conciliatory speech stressing that revolutionary reforms would be carried out "little by little", in an evolutionary spirit. The United States adopted a "wait and see" attitude. It was hoped

---

<sup>7</sup>One of the first steps taken by the chief of the Spanish peace mission was to formally request that the United States annex Cuba. More Spaniards, and Spanish capital, resided there than in any other distant area. Annexation was an attempt to protect those Spanish assets.

that Castro would turn out to be a moderate. Although Batiste's regime had been a strong supporter of the United States in Latin America, the previous dictator had usurped the democratic processes in Cuba and was not a stellar performer as far as human rights and freedom of press were concerned. Castro came to Washington in April of 1959 and instantly became the darling of the press when he promised democracy and freedom of the press. While the American press lionized Castro in Washington, back home his regime was consolidating its power by purging the country of all remnants of Bastista's supporters as well as opposition contenders. Batiste had been in power for over seventeen years, consequently very few of the upper to upper middle class were immune from the subsequent terror. This resulted in a large flight of Cuban capital to Miami. Castro demanded the return of the "enemies of the revolution" but the United States declined. Castro responded by expropriating over a billion dollars worth of American owned property in Cuba. During 1959 and 1960 Cuba also aided a series of revolution attempts in Panama, Guatemala, and the Dominican Republic. These combined with increasingly left leanings of Castro, made it apparent that he would not play ball with the United States. In December of 1959, the chief of the CIA's Western Hemisphere Division, Joseph C. King, put forward a memorandum that insisted that "Castro's far left dictatorship could not be permitted to stand because it could encourage expropriations of American property in other Latin American countries." The anti-Castro idea was carried by Allen Dulles to the 5412 Group meeting on 13 Jan 1960<sup>8</sup>, and despite reservations from State Department representatives, the idea was conditionally approved. (Prados 1986, p. 176)

## **2. Operation Pluto**

At the heart of Operation Pluto was the CIA's top secret policy paper, "A Program of Covert Action Against the Castro Regime." This paper called for four steps: (1) creation of a "responsible and unified" Cuban government in exile; (2) "a powerful propaganda

---

<sup>8</sup>The 5412 Group was a NSC clearinghouse organization for covert operations composed of President Eisenhower's personal appointee's, senior members of the State Department and the Pentagon, plus the DCI.

offensive"; (3) "a covert intelligence and action organization" in Cuba to be "responsive" to the exile opposition; and (4) "a paramilitary force outside of Cuba for future guerrilla action." The document also called for a "small air supply capability under deep cover as a commercial operation in another country. " (Wyden 1979, 25.)

The CIA requisitioned a 50-kilowatt transmitter from the U.S. Army in Germany and set it up on Swan Island located off the coast of Honduras. They also set up a recording studio in Miami and began to produce anti-Castro / anti-Communist material to be broadcast from the newly erected radio station. Within a month of the decision to go ahead with PLUTO, Cuba was being bombarded with propaganda encouraging the people to rise up and depose Castro.

Meanwhile the CIA approached exiled Cubans who controlled political factions in Miami, attempting to forge a coalition government. These included: Manuel Artime, leader of the Revolutionary Recovery Movement (MRR); Antonio de Varona, of the Rescate Movement; Sánchez Arango, who controlled the Triple A organization; and Dr. Justo Carrillo, who was the head of the Montecristi movement. Eventually it also included Manuel Ray, leader of the Movimiento Revolucionario del Pueblo (MRP). This group of Cubans represented the entire spectrum of Cuban political ideology ranging from de Verona on the right to Ray on the far left. The resulting Frente Revolucionario Democrático (FRD), was a tenuous collection of diverse groups each of whom needed the help of the United States to oust Castro from Cuba.

Through the FRD, the CIA was able to recruit the initial cadre of paramilitary personnel. Originally it was thought that twenty to forty men could be trained as guerrilla leaders. Once trained, they would be equipped with radios and infiltrated into Cuba to consolidate and organize the resistance groups that were already being urged on by the propaganda campaign. This follows the pattern established by the Jedburghs during World War II. The critical difference is that this guerrilla force was expected to carry all the water with respect to the operation. There would be no large conventional force to spearhead the operations. Initially it was thought that the propaganda campaign, combined with the

guerrilla organization supplied by covert means, would be enough to topple Castro. It soon became apparent that this was wishful thinking. There were early failures with the resupply missions and Castro was more adept at rooting out and destroying potential resistance than expected.

Unable to produce the desired results, the CIA began a series of escalations to OPERATION PLUTO. It was decided that there would have to be a large assault force to act as a catalyst in the revolt against Castro. The resulting mission creep introduced a whole new set of variables and operational constraints upon the CIA. The first problem to surface was security. No longer were they talking about twenty to forty men; now the operation would involve over a thousand, at numerous locations. The job of recruiting and training them in secrecy became almost impossible.

To handle increased requirements, the CIA set up large recruiting stations in Miami. Wyden describes the Cubans as not being able to do anything quietly. At one point some American youngsters tossed firecrackers into a Cuban recruiting camp near Homestead, FL. The trainees thought they were under attack from Castro's agents and burst out with rifles firing. An American youth was wounded. It took the intercession of Allen Dulles to keep the story out of the papers. (Wyden 1979, p. 45-46)

Constrained by the Neutrality laws, the CIA needed to find a location outside the United States to train the growing Cuban force.<sup>9</sup> The logical choice was Guatemala. The CIA had just engineered OPERATION SUCCESS which had brought Guatemalan President Miguel Ydígoras to power. He was only too happy to cooperate. Through Ydígoras, the CIA gained access to a large coffee plantation in Helvetia. Here, and in the surrounding mountains, the CIA eventually trained over 1400 recruits.

To transport the Cubans and needed supplies from Miami to Guatemala in secret, the CIA created a new proprietary. For approximately \$300,000 the CIA bought all of the

---

<sup>9</sup>The Neutrality Act states that the CIA cannot train indigenous forces for, or conduct operations against foreign governments from United States soil.

outstanding shares of Southern Air Transport.<sup>10</sup> This air operation was strictly for logistic use. There was a separate rebel air force being formed in Retalhuleu, Guatemala about thirty miles from the training camp in Helvetia.

Retalhuleu was an airfield built from scratch in the jungle of Guatemala. At a cost of \$1.8 million the airfield eventually supported fifteen B-26 bombers, five C-46 and seven C-54 transports. One of the major problems that developed was the lack of trained flight crews. The CIA interviewed over ninety Cuban applicants but not all could be accepted. In order to make up the difference, the CIA turned to Major General George Doster, commander of the Alabama Air National Guard to recruit American crews that could be used in OPERATION PLUTO.<sup>11</sup> Within forty-five days General Doster succeeded in recruiting eighty Americans with experience in B-26 and C-54 aircraft. These men then joined the Cubans at Retalhuleu. (Wyden 1979, p. 184)

OPERATION PLUTO also needed a naval component. Southern Air Transport would not be available to use in actual combat, and the rebel air force was not large enough to support all the logistical requirements of a large scale invasion. To shore up this logistical shortfall, the CIA acquired another faltering company called Mineral Carriers. Mineral Carriers owned two converted landing craft infantry (LCI) left over from World War II. Each was capable of carrying about 200 men and approximately 250 tons of supplies. The CIA also requisitioned the U.S.S. San Marcos, a 450-foot LSD (landing ship dock) from the US Navy. Additionally, they recruited the García Line Corporation which was the only Cuban line still running rice and sugar out of Havana. Garcia had six freighters that provided excellent cover. Garcia had been using one of his ships, the Río Escondido, to exfiltrate anti-Cuban leaders whom the CIA wanted out of Cuba. The concept of operations called for the "American" LSD to bring landing craft to pick up the troops from the Garcia freighters and the two LCI's and carry them to the beaches.

---

<sup>10</sup>It was felt that if military aircraft were used, security would be compromised.

<sup>11</sup>The Alabama Air National Guard was the last American unit to fly the aging B-26 bomber.

Originally the Cuban recruits were told that they were being supported by friendly American business interests. All official government sponsorship was denied. The size of the operation now made it impossible to hide the fact that the resources of the United States were being used to support this operation. The expanding size of the operation in Guatemala also presented external security problems. On 10 January 1960 the New York Times headlines read, "U.S. Helps Train an Anti-Castro Force at Secret Guatemalan Air -Ground Base." Photo's of the air base that were originally taken to stimulate recruiting found their way into Miami newspapers. If these public exposures did not get Castro's attention, the use of the rebel brigade to quell an internal uprising against Ydigoras in Guatemala must have. As time progressed there were numerous articles and pictures published throughout the country concerning the goings-on in Guatemala. In reality, it was no longer possible to consider OPERATION PLUTO a covert or even clandestine operation, yet the CIA pressed on, believing that they could still pull off the operation.

One of the major factors behind this belief was the tremendous political pressure being applied to the CIA. Vice President Nixon was pressing the CIA for a solution to the Cuban problem. It was hoped that the CIA could emulate the Guatemalan experience and deliver a quick victory before the election. Under pressure to produce, the CIA decided to escalate the PLUTO operation again. It was at this point that a crucial mistake was made. In order to produce a quick and decisive result, the insurgency effort was totally abandoned in favor of a conventional amphibious assault. The plan now looked entirely different than it had a few months earlier.

In retrospect, it seems ludicrous to expect a force of some 1400 conventionally trained exiles to prevail in an open attack against a regime that had for the most part consolidated its political position, and possessed the assets to defend itself. In late 1960 however, it was becoming painfully obvious that the guerrilla option was not going to work by itself. Latent resistance was not strong enough to be mobilized in the time span that politics demanded. Castro's anti-American rhetoric was increasing and the fledgling Kennedy Administration was feeling political pressure from the Cuban lobby, as well as bureaucratic

pressure from the CIA to go forward with the plan started by Eisenhower. Instead of giving the guerrilla option time to work on its own, the plan was accelerated by escalating the operation to include a frontal assault. It was thought the assault would facilitate the overthrow of Castro. Once the conventional mindset entered calculus, the operation was escalated again. This was manifested by a pure amphibious assault that totally abandoned the insurgent component. The CIA was now out of its element. They needed help. Correctly they turned to the military, but failed to let the military all the way in. Given the information supplied by the CIA, the Joint Staff endorsed the amphibious concept of operations. The limited staff that was allowed to look at pieces of the plan saw it in terms of a conventional operation. There was no reason to believe that an amphibious landing would not be successful. World War II had proven that the United States had no equal in this endeavor. The JCS was not fully aware of the political context that the CIA was operating in. Meaning they felt that eventually the military would have to be called in, and that the full weight of American support would be evident. The CIA on the other hand, still looked at PLUTO as a high leverage operation. In other words, they still thought they could still pull it off with minimum assets and minimum political exposure. They clung to operational assumptions that were valid for unconventional warfare after they escalated the operation to the conventional realm. These assumptions were reinforced when the JCS endorsed their concept of operations. Ultimately, disparity between operational and political reality led to the fiasco known as the Bay of Pigs.

## B. ANALYSIS

The results of this study reaffirms many of the criteria outlined in the previous chapter. In Contrast to the Jedburgh example, where most of the criteria were seen in a positive light, many of the criteria in the Cuban case were evident in a negative sense.

### 1. Strategic Criteria

In terms of strategic criteria Cuba seems to fall within the broad policy objectives of the United States. The strategic premise that Eisenhower and Kennedy were operating under was the containment of communism. Eisenhower's justification to go forward with the

planning for a program to eliminate Castro's regime was based on a belief that he was fighting communism. Most reports indicated that Castro was not a communist despite leftist tendencies. However, it was felt that Castro would eventually gravitate toward the communist camp if active measures were not taken to stop him. A communist presence so close to the United States was seen as intolerable. The reality that Cuba was not, and could not be, a lethal threat (until the introduction of nuclear weapons in 1961) diminished the political and military options. At the time, the benefits that could be derived by deposing Castro did not warrant a full scale intervention by the United States. There was determination on part of the American administrations to get rid of Castro, but neither was willing to overtly escalate the conflict to the point of possible conflict with the Soviet Union. Prior to the Cuban Missile Crisis, both the Eisenhower and Kennedy administrations were very conscious of the international political backlash that would ensue if they were to invade Cuba outright. The United States has a strong imperialist reputation in Latin America, especially in Cuba. This dates back to the Spanish American War. The idea of overt intervention into Cuba was seen as politically impossible at the time. Ironically, the Kennedy administration probably would have had the domestic support if he had asked. In 1961, the "Red Scare" was still a powerful tool to elicit fear and stir up nationalistic sentiments. The early American support that Castro received when he first came to power in 1959 had diminished as Castro's anti-American policies became more pronounced. Since the United States limited itself politically, it could not overtly bring its full economic and military power to bear.

## **2. Operational Criteria**

In the preceding chapter operational criteria were described as those that defined the possible in terms of organizational space. In the Cuban scenario the operational constraints were severe. First, there was not a permissive environment within Cuba to mobilize popular support. On Jan 1, 1959 most Cubans were overjoyed with the fall of Batiste. His corrupt regime had been in place since 1934 and the people wanted change. Before Castro emerged as the victor, there had been over 25 revolutionary groups contending for power. Initially

there may have been an opportunity to rally the other groups against Castro, but that quickly passed as the United States adopted a wait and see attitude. As Eisenhower took a cautious look, Castro was busy consolidating control. Mock trials and summary executions were frequent during the first months of the new regime. Seventy-five enemies of the revolution were machine gunned into a freshly bulldozed pit in Oriente, while 250 more were executed in Santiago de Cuba in the first few days. (Lazo 1968, p. 191) As the months went on, Castro was very effective in suppressing his enemies.

Aside from the outright executions, Castro used the "labor reforms" to justify the government intervening in a number of private businesses. Castro soon had control of the newspapers and other media organizations that he used to silence the opposition. Unable to speak openly, opposition leaders were forced underground. Those that could not survive in that environment were soon caught by the regime, or departed for the safety of Miami.

Land reform was carried out under the guise of anti-American expropriations. Castro confiscated over \$25 billion worth of privately owned property. Almost \$1 billion of this was owned by Americans. (Lazo 1968, p. 240) The effect was to plunder the Cuban middle class. As Wickam-Crowley has pointed out, leaders of insurgencies tend to come from the middle class. The middle class is also where insurgencies derive their financial and human capital to sustain the movement.<sup>12</sup> After Castro took control, this pool of capital either fled or was eliminated. This had the effect of decreasing the mobilization potential inside of Cuba to almost zero. There were a few groups such as Manuel Ray's MRP operating underground, but their financing was weak, and number of recruits limited. Eventually, to sustain any type of organization Ray fled to Miami to tap into the financial and human capital that resided there.

The CIA found a plethora of mobilization potential in Miami and assumed that it would be the same inside Cuba. Consistently the United States buys into the peasant theory of revolution. The CIA assumed the peasants would be willing to rise up at the slightest

---

<sup>12</sup>See Guerrillas & Revolution in Latin America: A Comparative Study of Insurgents and Regimes since 1956, (1992).

provocation. This was wrong. The Cuban middle class was the revolutionary body and not the peasant. Castro's effectiveness in routing out the middle class was underestimated. The fact is that there was no significant counter-revolutionary potential left in Cuba after the collapse of the middle class.

The second operational criteria postulates that a parallel operational vision is required to allow all participants to achieve their minimum or maximum objectives. At first glance this seems to be the case during OPERATION PLUTO. All of the players to include the Kennedy administration, the CIA, and all the coalition factions in Miami, felt that the removal of Castro was essential to their personal plans for Cuba. What they were not able to agree on was the specifics of implementation and the role each should play during and after the invasion. As stated earlier, the administration and the CIA wanted to maintain a low profile while at the same time keeping tight control over the specifics of the operation. From all appearances, the minimum objectives for the United States was the removal of Castro from power. The maximum objective was the removal of Castro and the installation of a liberal regime friendly to the United States without any political backlash. For the exiled Cubans, the minimum goal was deposing Castro. The Cuban maximum objective was defined not as a coalition government, but by each faction as gaining control of Cuba for itself.

Both parties agreed on the minimum objective but the program was not designed to satisfy the minimum. The United States was trying for its maximum. The exiled Cubans realized this but went along to satisface their minimal objectives. If the invasion had worked and Castro had been ousted, who would the United States have supported? Certainly it would not have been the pro-Batiste faction. It also would not have been Ray's MRP who advocated "fidelisimo without fidel." The Cubans must have suspected as much. They knew that a coalition government was impossible. The diversity of ideology was too great. They went along with the Americans because they had no other way to accomplish their minimal objectives.

For their part, the Cubans were not interested in political fallout. They wanted to politicize their situation and exercise control of the operation. The Cubans first choice would have been to use the overt power of the United States to dispose of Castro. Once that was done, there would be an internal consolidation and one faction would come to power. Barring that, their preference was for the United States to supply them with money and arms and let them proceed as they saw fit. As it turned out, the Cubans were forced to accept the CIA's concept of operations as the price of US involvement.

### **3. Tactical Criteria**

Because paramilitary forces are weak in comparison to regular forces, they need a veil of anonymity. Tactically this translates to the need to be able to operate in a secure environment. As an operation expands, the span of control for security becomes harder to control. OPERATION PLUTO grew beyond the bounds of the CIA's ability to control the security environment. By expanding the operation to include a separate Air Force, Navy, and multiple operating locations, there was no way to effectively keep the operation from leaking. This meant that the invading force was vulnerable to attack. Although the guerrilla option was abandoned, the CIA never adjusted the required force levels to compensate for the changed nature of the operation. Closely related to the security issue is that of logistics. Because the guerrilla depends on anonymity, he is required to have a logistics system that allows him to remain unidentified. For the most part, the CIA was able to maintain this logistics system until the operation grew beyond their capability. Even at its earliest stages, OPERATION PLUTO represented a major challenge for logistics. As the operation grew to include a rebel air force, a clandestine navy, along with 1400 troops, the bill was almost impossible to fill. To its credit, the CIA succeeded in creating the rebel air force and built a small naval task force. Unfortunately, it was too small to carry out the assigned objective.

### **C. SUMMARY**

The Cuban case clearly demonstrates the political and military constraints imposed by a Type B conflict scenario. Kennedy was unwilling to escalate the conflict to the level

of a Type A scenario because it simply did not offer the rewards associated with those types of risks. It was not worth expending the political capital needed to attain the desired results. At the same time, he desperately wanted to deliver a solution to the Cuban problem. The CIA offered an option that might allow him to achieve his goal without escalating to Type A conflict. Unfortunately neither the President, nor the CIA possessed the patience to allow a true guerrilla option to develop. In order to get results, they ignored, or misinterpreted, many of the criteria that are essential if paramilitary option is going to be used.

Operationally, the CIA was relying on an inherent mobilization potential inside of Cuba. As we have seen, the potential was just not there. The operational vision between the United States and the exiled Cubans contained inconsistencies. The Cubans wanted the U.S. to use its power to remove Castro outright. The United States on the other hand, was intent on a clandestine operation to provide plausible denial. As it turned out, neither party got what it wanted. It seems increasingly important to the success of such operations that there be a common operational strategy that will allow each party to realize their objectives.

Perhaps the most important lesson to take away from the Cuban experience is the lesson of asymmetric motivation. When an operation is designed to directly overthrow an incumbent regime, that regime will perceive the threat as lethal. It will resist as it would in a total war scenario. This presents a dilemma for the intervenor when it considers the objective as a limited engagement. By using a paramilitary force, the intervenor concedes superior strength to the defending regime in most cases. In order to overcome this lack of strength, it is imperative that the paramilitary operations be grounded with a solid strategic policy. The force must also be superior in terms of operational and tactical skills. This is what happened at the Bay of Pigs. The United States tried to achieve an ultimate objective using a limited force. The operational assumptions were flawed in the belief that there was sufficient latent resistance to Castro's regime. Tactically, the invading forces lacked sufficient strength, logistics, and surprise to achieve their stated objectives. The nature of paramilitary operations mandates that without the support of the indigenous people, they can only be used to achieve minimal short term objectives. They can also be used to

augment regular forces, but they cannot be required achieve unlimited objectives by themselves.

#### **IV. TYPE C ENVIRONMENT**

Type C environments are the most constrained in terms of political flexibility. As the overt threats to our nation diminish, there is a corresponding pressure to use restricted means to achieve our objectives. This was evident during the eighties with respect to the United States policy toward Nicaragua. Posing no lethal threat to the United States, the Carter, and later the Reagan Administrations, were constrained from using the military to achieve their objectives in Nicaragua. Pressed between doing nothing and having to do "something", the United States turned to the paramilitary option.

##### **A. NICARAGUA**

When the Sandinista's took control of Managua in 1979, it was the latest in a long succession of political pendulum swings from the Conservative to the Liberal Party. This time, however, was different in that they reversed more than a century of *caudillo* politics inherited from colonial Spain. In its place, they introduced a Marxist-Lenninst bureaucratic regime. Closely aligned with Cuba, the Sandinistas, it appeared, were determined to spread revolution to the rest of Central America. This "communist beach head" in Nicaragua threatened to undermine regional stability in Latin America. Initial attempts by the Carter Administration to promote political moderation through economic incentives failed.<sup>13</sup> Encouraged by Cuba, the USSR, and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), Nicaragua continued to gravitate toward the "socialist" camp. This evolution eventually brought Nicaragua into direct confrontation with the newly elected Reagan Administration bent on restoring stability while at the same time rolling back communist gains.

---

<sup>13</sup>Through the Inter-American Development Bank the United States voted for all loans proposed to Nicaragua. The bank gave the Sandinistas \$262 million in the last nineteen months of the Carter Administration, almost twice the amount it gave the Somoza government in the nineteen previous years (\$134 million)

## **1. History**

Prior to 1900, in the spirit of Manifest Destiny, the United States had been pressing hard to stabilize a hegemonic position in the Caribbean Basin. The reasons for this were later expressed well by Assistant Secretary of State, Robert Olds in 1927.

Geographical facts cannot be ignored. The Central American area down to and including the Isthmus of Panama constitutes a legitimate sphere of influence for the United States; if we are to have due regard for our own safety and protection. . . . Call it a sphere of influence, or what you will, we do control the destines of Central America, and we do it for the simple reason that the national interest absolutely dictates such a course. (Tierney 1982, p. 6)

This desire for regional hegemony had been effectively blocked by Spain and England prior to the early 1900's. By the turn of the century, the favorable end of the Spanish-American War, and a rising German threat to the British, combined to create the conditions that made it possible for the United States to effectively exert dominant influence over the Caribbean. The Panama canal was the instrument of American control in Central America and the Caribbean Basin. To protect and maintain this control, the United States relied on a strategy of intervention that reflected two central themes: the need to restrain internal political revolt; and to prevent foreign military interference.

In 1909 the United States first intervened in Nicaragua on behalf of rebels who opposed the regime of José Santa Zelaya. Zelaya was a Liberal dictator that had turned Nicaragua into a Central American military power. He had pressured the British to leave and then occupied the entire country. He organized a strong militia and by 1907 was strong enough to defeat both the Honduran and Salvadoran armies together. This expansionism was running directly counter to the U.S. goal of regional stability and peace. Under the pretense of protecting American lives and property, the U.S. Marines landed at the town of Bluefields on the Southeast coast of Nicaragua. They secured the town for rebels to use as a sanctuary. By December of 1909, Zelaya realized that he could not win militarily and resigned in favor

of another member of the Liberal Party. Washington refused to recognize the new appointee and the war continued. Protected by 400 Marines, the rebels soon forced the government in Managua to step down. The resulting coalition government was headed by a liberal named General Juan J. Estrada who promised to hold free elections within two years. By mid 1911 the U.S. had taken control of the Nicaraguan economy. The United States secured loans on behalf of Nicaragua totaling more than \$1.5 million. (Tierney 1982, p. 8) This combined with other measures stabilized the economy and it looked as if American intervention into the Central American civil war was a success. The peace was not to last.

Within a year, conservative members of the coalition government staged a successful coup d'état. Following United States recognition of the new government, dissatisfied elements of the Army loyal to the Liberal Party launched another revolution. The Nicaraguan government requested U.S. intervention and Washington responded by sending 2,700 troops to Bluefields again in August of 1912. After landing on the eastern coast, a Marine battalion proceeded to Managua where it quickly put down the insurrection. The Marines withdrew but left a Legation Guard of 100 troops that kept the peace for the next thirteen years. This American military presence would prove to have lasting effects on future U.S. / Nicaraguan relationships.

United States policy in Nicaragua fixated on preserving order and stability. To achieve this stability, the United States was dependent upon Nicaragua's dominant Conservative Party. The Conservatives, in turn, relied upon the United States to support and to justify their continued hold on the politics of the country. (Tierney 1982, p. 10) Liberals came to see the United States as an evil force that supported a regime determined to keep them out of power.

By 1925 the United States had emerged from World War I with better relations with Britain and Japan and was less concerned with foreign intervention into Central America. Despite this reduced threat, the United States still worried about stability in the region surrounding the Panama canal. To preserve the peace in Nicaragua after the United States

pulled out, an apolitical body that could ensure democratic transitions between the Liberal and Conservative Parties of Nicaragua was created. The Guardia Nacional was a military body composed of liberal and conservative members. Its leader was a member of the Liberal Party named Anastasio Somoza García.

Predictably, once the United States departed in 1926, the elected conservative President, Carlos Solórzno, came under attack by rival conservative General Chamorro. Within five months Solórzno was forced to resign and Chamorro assumed the Presidency. It almost an exact repeat of 1909, Chamorro's government was not recognized by the United States and Liberals led by José M. Moncada, began the inevitable uprising with the support of Mexico. Lacking American support, Chamorro stepped down in favor of fellow conservative Adolfo Díaz.

Mexico had undergone a revolution in 1910 and many Americans believed that Mexico was dominated by "Bolshevism", fueling fears inside the State Department that Mexico was out to challenge U.S. hegemony in Central America. (Tierney 1982, p. 14) Díaz appealed to the United States for help in putting down the Liberal challenge. The United States responded with over 3,000 Marines. Bolstered by the Marines, the Guardia soon forced the Liberals to negotiate a truce. The only hold outs were formed into a band led by Augusto Sandino.

As a young man Sandino left Nicaragua to live in Honduras. Trouble with the law caused him to relocate in Guatemala where he worked for the United Fruit Company. It was here that he became acquainted with the workers' grievances against U.S. "imperialism." Later, after moving to Mexico, Sandino became exposed to a variety of radical political movements. In 1926 when the civil war broke out in Nicaragua, and America threatened a second military intervention, Sandino knew he had to return to his country and fight for freedom against American domination. With his entire life savings of about three hundred dollars, he bought arms in Honduras and equipped a band of twenty-nine men. (Tierney 1982, p. 14) These were the original Sandinistas. Sandino's initial engagements resulted in

defeats and he was forced to join with Moncada's army. When Moncada decided to negotiate with the United States, Sandino refused to cooperate. He called Moncada a traitor and fled with his band into the hills so that they could continue the fight against American intervention using guerrilla tactics.

In what has become a common mistake, the United States underestimated the amount of local support that a guerrilla organization could derive. Two months after Sandino and his thirty men fled to the hills of northern Nicaragua, Sandino and a group of 300 guerrillas attacked the town of Octal. Octal was being defended by close to ninety Marines and members of the Guardia. Running out of ammunition, the guerrillas quickly forced the defenders into a desperate situation. They would have been destroyed except that two U.S. airplanes spotted the battle and returned to Managua for help. Five American de Haviland bombers were dispatched to Octal to strafe and bomb the Sandinistas. In the end, over two hundred of the guerrillas were killed. News agencies reported that Americans were slaughtering helpless Nicaraguan peasants. Sandino's popularity soared. As he successfully evaded U.S. attempts to capture him for over seven years, Sandino attained almost folk-hero status for the international left-wing of the 1920's. (Tierney 1982, p. 20)

The guerrilla war lasted for seven years between 1927 and 1933. As time went on, Sandino's cause was taken up as a rallying cry for the Latin American left. Fueled by myth, Sandino's popularity was actually greater outside of Nicaragua than at home. There seems to be little evidence that majority of Nicaraguans supported Sandino. U.S. presence brought the stability needed to hold fair elections. Moncada was elected by popular vote bringing the Liberal Party to power. The United States first intervened on behalf of the Conservative Party and ironically created the conditions whereby the Liberals could achieve power. Despite this, the United States found it harder and harder to justify its policy of intervention against the intense propaganda being promulgated throughout the international and domestic communities. With eerie foreshadowing of a later guerrilla war, American policy makers reappraised the U.S. role in Nicaragua and decided on a gradual phaseout concurrent with

a "Nicaraguanization" of the war against Sandino. By 1930 only about 1,200 Marines remained. Sandino had always used American intervention as the crux of his argument for continuing to fight. It was felt that if the United States withdrew, there would be little justification for Sandino to continue. In the end, it did not matter to the United States which party was in power as long as it could maintain stability. This lesson was understood by the leader of the Guardia Nacional, Anastasio Somoza García.

Upon withdrawal of the United States, Sandino was persuaded to come in from the hills for negotiations. As he left the negotiations, he was gunned down by the Guardia. Just like that the Sandinistas were finished. With the primary threat to the Nicaraguan government eliminated, Somoza turned his Guardia to the task of securing power for himself. In 1936 he engineered the President's resignation and then held elections. The Conservative party including ex-Presidents Chamorro and Díaz, appealed to the United States to supervise the elections but were refused. The elections were supervised by the Guardia, and Somoza was elected President January 1, 1937. For the next forty-two years through the use of the Guardia Nacional, and the blessing of the American government, the Somoza family ruled Nicaragua with virtually a freehand as long as stability was preserved.

The success of the Cuban revolution in 1959 inspired a new generation of Nicaraguan rebels. These "new" Sandinistas were a coalition of revolutionaries with different ideologies. The first were the *Guerra Popular Prolongada* (GPP) who subscribed to the foco theory. The GPP believed that a classic guerrilla war was necessary to overcome the reactionary forces of Somoza's National Guard and to prevent foreign intervention by the United States. The second group formed after disillusionment with the rural approach. The *Tendencia Proletaria* (TP), led by Jaime Wheelock, felt the urban workers held the key to Nicaragua's future. This urban based organization called for a Marxist-Lenninst approach. Somoza's counter revolutionary forces were brutally efficient at keeping both of these factions of the FSLN at bay. By 1974, Humberto Ortega and his brother Daniel inspired a third group within the FSLN known as *Tendencia Insurreccional* (TI or Tercerista). This group was able

to bridge the gap between the GPP and the TP. The Terceristas forged a coalition that combined the urban and rural components of the FSLN. Espousing democratic socialism as their goal for Nicaragua, The FSLN was now in a position to take advantage of new U.S. foreign policy objectives. The Carter administration's emphasis on human rights brought Somoza's regime under tight scrutiny. In April, the Administration delayed shipments of military hardware on the grounds that human rights were being ignored.

Encouraged that the United States would not support Somoza, the Sandinistas seized the opportunity to exploit their position. With Cuban support, the FSLN seized power in July of 1979. Almost immediately Nicaragua embarked on an unprecedented military buildup.<sup>14</sup> Neighboring countries began to sound the alarm. El Salvador's Ambassador to the United Nations told the UN General Assembly,

In approximately three years, under the pretext of national defense, Nicaragua has acquired offensive weapons whose combined power is greater than that of all the other Central American States, with the sole aim of implanting Marxism-Leninism in the region on a permanent basis, through violence, and with impunity, knowing that with such an imbalance of forces the other Central American countries, if they have to rely on their own resources, cannot stand up to this machinery of war and expansion. (Turner 1987, p. 19)

## **2. Mission**

The Reagan administration was not ready for a direct military confrontation with Cuba, nor were they willing to sit by and do nothing. Covert action allowed the

---

<sup>14</sup>Jiri Valenta and Virginia Valenta, "Sandinistas in Power," *Problems of Communism*, Sept-October 1985, p.23 "There appears to be a rough division of labor among the communist states that give security assistance to Nicaragua-a pattern also observed in Soviet-bloc dealings with such 'socialist-orientated' countries as Angola, Ethiopia and (formerly) Grenada. The Soviets appear to be responsible for overall command and control; the Cubans provide manpower and serve as military and counter-intelligence advisors; the East Germans provide trucks, policy specialists, and highly qualified communications technicians; the Bulgarians aid the processing of information in security matters; and Bulgaria and (to a lesser degree) Czechoslovakia provide explosives and ammunition."

Administration to act without having to spend the political capital required for an overt action. Building on an earlier finding by the President Carter, President Reagan signed a finding that provided money and backing to encourage and embolden the political opposition. It was hoped that coercive pressure would force the Sandinistas to make concessions and adopt a more moderate political stance.

Originally El Salvador, and not Nicaragua was targeted. Through Nicaragua, Cuba was supplying leftist guerrillas of the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN) in an insurgency against the civilian-military junta that governed El Salvador. In March of 1981, President Reagan signed a top-secret finding that authorized propaganda and political support to the moderate Christian Democrats and military officers that were opposed to the guerrillas. The United States attempted to moderate the Sandinista's support to the FMLN by withholding \$15 million in economic aid promised by the Carter Administration. The Sandinistas were not about to give up on their revolutionary vision for \$15 million, and told representatives of the United States that Nicaragua had a right to its own foreign policy and that American aid should not be used as blackmail.<sup>15</sup> Nicaragua continued to funnel arms and supplies to the FMLN. The next step in the covert war in Latin America would be the introduction of a paramilitary force designed to undermine the ability of the Nicaraguan government to support the FMLN.

The covert program combined three proposals. First the CIA lobbied for the formation of a 500 man U.S.-supervised force on the Honduran border. This group was to be composed of Cubans and Nicaraguans not associated with the Somoza regime. The CIA also proposed secret assistance to a larger paramilitary force of ex-Nicaraguan National Guardsmen already being formed with help from Argentina, Honduras, Venezuela and Colombia. The third proposal called for an increase in financial support for political moderates begun under the Carter Administration. In November of 1981, President Reagan

---

<sup>15</sup>Conversation between U.S. Ambassador Lawrence Pezzullo and Nicaraguan Minister of Agricultural Development. (Woodward 1987, p. 114)

signed National Security Decision Directive 17, which incorporated the third proposal and authorized assistance to one or both paramilitary forces. (Peterzell 1984, p. 75)

The CIA decided that the most expedient method to get the Contras organized was to piggy back on the Argentine effort. They already had a Honduran infrastructure in place and U.S. involvement could be more readily concealed. Small scale harassment operations had been going on for over two years and had mostly been ineffective. Given U.S. help, it might be possible for these anti-Sandinistas to keep Managua off balance. There were drawbacks to this course of action. It was recognized that a paramilitary force composed of former Somoza supporters would never have widespread indigenous appeal. However the initial operational concept sold by CIA to the Administration, and laid out for the Intelligence Oversight Committee's, was one of interdiction and not political overthrow.

Within four months of U.S. involvement, serious cross boarder operations into Nicaragua began. The first targets were the Rio Negro Bridge near Somotillo, and the Rio Coco Bridge near Ocotal. Both were major bridges in terms of logistical importance to the Sandinistas. During the next several months, the Contra groups were expanded and armed with U.S.-made M-16's, Belgian FAL automatic rifles, M-79 grenade launchers, mortars, and machine guns. In April, an NSC summary paper on the destabilization program reported that "in Nicaragua, the Sandinistas are under growing pressure thanks to our covert efforts." (Robinson 1987, p. 50) In the face of what now seemed an organized resistance, the Sandinista's countered by declaring a state of emergency and clamping down on the local press while beginning a concerted effort to smash the many small groups that opposed them. All rebel attacks had centered in the eastern part of the country. The towns of San Carlos and Bilwascarma, were occupied by exile troops. The Sandinista's counterattacked and recaptured the towns. To pacify the local areas, the Sandinistas began the relocation of approximately 10,000 Miskitos Indians from villages along the eastern border with Honduras to camps away from border. This relocation effort has been the source of scores of human rights violations allegations against the Sandinistas. (Peterzall 1984, p. 81) It also led to the

mobilization of a third anti-Sandinista coalition called the MISURA which are aligned with the FDN.<sup>16</sup>

William Casey, the Director of Central Intelligence (DCI), believed that ultimately the Contra's efforts would not be enough. To achieve the "rollback" implications that the Reagan foreign policy objectives demanded, eventually there would have to be a political force that could mobilize support to overthrow the Sandinista regime. As he moved the CIA toward that end, Casey ran into resistance at home.

In May of 1983 Casey was called before the House Intelligence Committees where they made known that their interpretation of recent escalations in the covet war were beyond the scope of the original Presidential finding. Despite a move by the House Committee to cut all funding, there was a compromise. Contingent upon the President issuing a new clarifying finding within the next five months, an additional \$19 million was allocated to the Contra project. These funds were subject to the Boland Amendment which prohibited the CIA from spending funds that directly contributed to the overthrow of the Nicaraguan government. (Woodward 1987, p. 279)

With this tentative support from Congress and five months to press the Sandinistas before a new finding was required, the CIA intensified efforts to give the Contras some political context, arguing that armed bands roaming the mountains on hit-and-run missions were not going to make a real difference. (Woodward 1987, p. 445) The CIA pushed to further isolate the Sandinistas by extending support to Edén Pastora, the disaffected former member of the Sandinista Revolution. Pastora was now the leader of the Revolutionary Democratic Alliance (ARDE), based in Costa Rica. The ARDE was composed of former Sandinistas and anti-Somoza activists. If the Democratic National Front (FDN), based in Honduras and led by the former officers of Somoza's National Guard, and the smaller ARDE could find some common ground through ties to the United States, it was possible that there

---

<sup>16</sup>MISURA is a coalition of the Miskitos, Rama, and Sumu Indian tribes.

might be the beginnings of a political consensus that could emerge as a moderate alternative to challenge the Sandinistas.

To weaken the regime and enhance the opposition's position, the CIA supplied its two umbrella organizations, the FDN and the ARDE, with T-28, C-47, and Cessna O-2 aircraft.<sup>17</sup> They also supplied a limited naval capability to carry out raids on ports and shipping.<sup>18</sup> These new weapons were used to concentrate attacks on the economic infrastructure of the regime. Attacks that centered on the Sandinistas ability to import oil were particularly effective. Two aircraft raids were conducted on Puerto Sandino, a receiving point for oil deliveries to Nicaragua. At Corinto twenty-five thousand residents were temporarily forced from their homes after two speedboats raided the port. Firing at the shore, eight large storage tanks containing 3.4 million gallons of oil were set aflame. Soon afterward the Exxon Corporation ordered its own tankers to avoid Nicaraguan waters. (Prados 1986, p. 393)

To press the Sandinistas over the edge, Langley ordered the ports of Nicaragua mined to cut off the bulk of Nicaragua's import trade. This was accomplished through the use of the mother ship and the fast attack boats. On 3 January 1984, a Japanese flagged ship struck a mine outside of Corinto. This was the first of a dozen ships from six different nations to be damaged in the mining campaign. (Prados, 1986, p. 394) Congress presumed that the mining effort was undertaken by the ARDE and the FDN but in reality it was carried out by

---

<sup>17</sup>To circumvent the Boland restrictions evidence suggests that the military declared the airplanes as surplus. This reduced them to having no "value". They were then transferred to a joint government project called "Elephant Herd" which served as a clearing house from which the CIA obtained the "surplus."

<sup>18</sup> For this purpose the CIA obtained and outfitted a freighter with communications and navigation gear and equipment to launch a small flotilla of heavily armed, high speed motorboats. The mother ship acted as command post and could carry raiding parties to the more distant targets. It also carried an armed helicopter that could support the raids. This was paid for by the CIA contingency funds and as such was not subject to the restriction on the \$19 million appropriation (Prados 1986, p. 392)

the CIA through the use of contract workers known as “unilaterally controlled Latino assets” (UCLA’s). (Woodward 1987, p. 361) When this became public four months later, Congress refused to authorize another \$21 million being sought by the Administration.

In October of 1984 a Contra manual *Psychological Operations in Guerrilla Warfare* was made public. This manual contained statements on “neutralization”, implying assassination. This was the straw that broke the back of congressional support. Congress cut off funding to the Contras and banned any support, “directly or indirectly,” until December of 1985. Obviously, this had a detrimental effect on the ability of the CIA to continue supporting the covert program. With the CIA officially out of the Contra business, it fell to the NSC to take a more active role in the conduct of the operation. The NSC secretly approached foreign governments to contribute funding directly to the Contra's.<sup>19</sup> With the loss of public support and funding by the United States Congress, the strains on the fragile Contra coalition began to show. The FDN lost its alliance with the Miskitos Indians. When MISURA lost CIA funding, they sued for an accommodation with Managua. Tensions developed between the politically stronger FDN and the ARDE. Pastora had been unwilling to compromise with the FDN on the issue of working with former Somoza personnel. As funding became tight, the political and ideological divisions between the two organizations were exposed. In an attempt to capitalize on the United States' lack of public resolve and the Contra's divisiveness, Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega flew to Moscow to ask for \$200 million in aid. (Woodward 1987, p. 464) Meanwhile the Contras were forced to continue in an almost hand to mouth manner throughout the remainder of 1984, 85, and much of 1986.

Perhaps in response to embarrassment over the Soviet aid, and in an effort to stop the Sandinistas from decimating the Contras, Congress partially lifted the ban in December of

---

<sup>19</sup>Woodward claims that National Security Advisor Robert C. McFarlane approached the Saudis and obtained at least \$24 million in secret support. He also credits the Israeli's with providing several million dollars in financial and military aid. LTC Oliver North is reported to have made arrangements for South Korea and Taiwan to make contributions to the Contra's.

1985. It authorized limited assistance allowing the CIA to provide intelligence advice, communications equipment, and training. In addition, Congress authorized \$27 million in humanitarian Contra assistance, including food, medical supplies and some transportation.

By October of 1986 Congress had lifted the ban and authorized \$100 million for the Contras. (Woodward 1987, p. 590) With support flowing freely, the Contras began to make significant gains. During 1987 they penetrated virtually every part of the country outside the Pacific coast and demonstrated widespread support among the peasant population. They inflicted heavy casualties on the Sandinista army and crippled its transportation network. In face of this mounting pressure from the Contras, combined with decreased Soviet support, the Sandinistas agreed to negotiations with the Contras in November of 1987. Meanwhile the roof was preparing to cave in on the CIA's program. In October a Contra supply plane was shot down by the Sandinista's. Eugene Hasenfus, the loadmaster, was captured. During a widely broadcast trial from Nicaragua, he claimed to be working for the CIA. Later that month came revelations that funds for the Contras were being illegally obtained through the sale of arms to Iran. As subsequent investigations occurred over the next three years, the ability of the United States to conduct the Contra program ceased. The Reagan, and subsequent Bush Administrations were forced to distance themselves.

## **B. ANALYSIS**

The Nicaraguan case study further illuminates many of the obstacles that must be overcome by the intervenor if it wishes to pursue a covert paramilitary option in a Type C scenario.

### **1. Strategic Criteria**

If the strategic criteria depend on the political, military, and economic environment of the intervenor, then initially, the United States was in a solid position to pursue a paramilitary option in Nicaragua. President Reagan campaigned on a platform to strengthen U.S. intelligence assets, rebuild the United States military, and to get tough with the communists. President Carter had been practically run out of office because of intelligence

failures associated with Iran. Over the last six years the Soviets had made significant gains in South Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos. They extended their influence in Africa through Angola, Mozambique, and Ethiopia. South Yemen and Afghanistan were also new additions to the Soviet sphere of influence. There was a very real perception that the United States was losing ground to the Soviets. On the tails of Reagan's election mandate, the Republicans gained a majority in the Senate. No one wanted to appear soft on communism. Perhaps the Democrats had cut the intelligence infrastructure too far after the Church Committee's indictment of the CIA? Maybe it was time to loosen the restraints? Whatever the reason, the United States was ready for a change in 1981. Accordingly, Reagan delivered an agent of change by selecting William Casey as DCI. Known as a champion of covert operations, he was unanimously approved by the Senate.<sup>20</sup> There seems to be enough evidence to say Congress knew that the Administration was about to take a more active approach to foreign policy, and that covert action would be one of its instruments.

Having been given tacit approval by Congress, the Administration was eager to blunt the most recent Soviet expansion into Central America. There was an intense need by the new Administration to do something. At the same time, politically, the United States could not unleash the military. Secretary of State Alexander Haig argued that the United States should impose a blockade of Cuba to stop the flow of arms to El Salvador through Nicaragua. He pleaded, "Go to the source. . . . Lay down a marker. . . . This one you can win." (Woodward 1987, p. 116) Secretary of Defense Casper Weinberger wanted no part of a military solution. Vietnam still loomed large in American military psyche. The answer was found somewhere in between the two extremes. A covert paramilitary action to interdict the arms flow was proposed. President Reagan signed the finding and Congress was notified.

Only after the operation evolved from interdiction and harassment, to one designed to overthrow the Nicaraguan government, did Congress balk. The reasons for the change

---

<sup>20</sup>Casey was a former OSS Jedburgh during WWII

will be discussed under operational criteria, but this evolution and escalation was critical. The Administration and the CIA cut Congress out of the process. Congress became suspicious and began to dig. When they found they had been lied to, they closed ranks and began to use the Contra program as a political stick with which to beat the Administration. When Congressman Edward P. Boland went public with the program on 8 December, 1982 it was apparent that the Reagan Administration no longer had the political environment that would allow a covert operation in Nicaragua. The program was continued for eight more years by the overzealous, and sometimes illegal, efforts of determined operators. The fact that the operators had to resort to illegal means to circumvent the will of Congress is indicative of the importance satisfying the strategic criteria.

## **2. Operational Criteria**

When the CIA notified Congress that it was going to conduct covert interdiction operations against Nicaragua it had an operational concept that would sell to Congress. It allowed them to support the Administration while at the same time providing themselves with political cover. If the program was discovered, it was within the basic policy lines that had been laid out and accepted by the public. Unfortunately, the covert program addressed the symptom but not the problem. Stopping the flow of weapons might slow the export of revolution, but what the Administration really wanted was a rollback of Soviet gains in Central America. To do this it was necessary make a dramatic change in the status quo. Toppling the Sandinistas would make a severe statement to the Cubans and the Soviets. Not willing to spend the political capital needed to push through such a policy, the Administration relied on gradual escalation in size and scope of the paramilitary operation shielding it from Congress.

Although the decision to expand the goals of the program put the Administration at odds with Congress, it created the common operational vision required to recruit a coalition of Contras. The maximum objective of the United States (overthrow of the Sandinista regime) was the minimum objective of the Contras. The Contras were fighting to overthrow

the government and gain power for themselves. They would never fight just to interdict arms unless it would eventually lead to the fall of the Sandinistas.

Given the minimum objectives for the Contras, the coalition members each had different maximums. The MISURA were primarily concerned with cultural and political autonomy. They were willing to concede power to the Sandinistas, or anyone else, as soon as they thought they could get autonomous concessions. The FDN, who's leadership was composed of former Somotista's, wanted to regain the power that they had lost in the Sandinista revolution. The ARDE was seeking to block Somoza's supporters from regaining their former status, while at the same time ascending to power themselves. These different factions provided a ready mobilization potential, but as in previous case studies, the coalitions were shaky at best. Once the minimum objective was met, it became almost impossible to hold the coalition together to form a political consensus. Despite the lack of political harmony, credit must be given to the Contra army. They were cohesive enough to endure the inconsistent, on again off again, foreign policy of the United States.

Once again, the United States showed a lack of understanding of relative motivation. For the Sandinistas, the minimum acceptable outcome was the retention of power. As in the Cuban case, American minimum objectives in Nicaragua exceeded the threshold that the Sandinistas were willing to concede. It is improbable to think that a guerrilla force backed by the United States could overcome this asymmetry of motivation given that the United States Congress was publicly unwilling to support the Contra's minimum objectives.

### **3. Tactical Criteria**

More than any other case that has been looked at, the security environment surrounding Nicaragua played a crucial role in the conduct of the paramilitary program. From the very beginning it was plain that the United States was involved. Prior to U.S. involvement the Contras were unable to mount much of a resistance. When bridges began to be blown simultaneously the Sandinistas knew they were getting outside help. Jaime Wheelock of the Sandinista ruling directorate stated, "there are too many things happening

at once to be a coincidence. . . . All these elements lead to one conclusion. The CIA is the only force with the power to do these things at once." (Woodward 1987, p. 405) After Congressman Boland leaked the program, there were a host of operational and tactical limitations. One telling example involved operational dealings with Saudi Arabia. The Administration approached the Saudis about the possibility of providing covert aid to the Contras. However, Saudi foreign policy was at odds with the Contra program. The Sandinistas were basically pro-Arab, while the two U.S. backed regimes in Costa Rica and El Salvador, had recently engaged unmistakable anti-Arab diplomacy and moved their embassies in Israel from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem. If word should leak that Saudi Arabia was supporting an anti-Arab regime, it would be very embarrassing. The Saudis had no confidence that secrets could be kept in the Reagan Administration and initially refused the request. (Woodward 1987, p. 402)

The fact that United States support for the Contras was common knowledge made it possible for the Sandinistas to exploit world opinion through skillful propaganda. This resulted in a ruling against the United States in the International Court of Justice.<sup>21</sup> This led to further complications in terms of domestic Congressional support. Not only were there problems with our own organizations leaking, but there were also problems with the intermediaries that were used to facilitate the logistical flow between the diverse countries involved. Manucher Ghorbanifar, an Iranian middleman, eventually became disenchanted with the on-again / off-again U.S. policy. He leaked that the United States government and Israel were making substantial profits on the sale of arms to Iran and redistributing the proceeds to the Contra program. The resulting Iran-Contra affair was an intense embarrassment and had the potential to bring about the downfall of the President.

---

<sup>21</sup>Nicaragua took the matter of the mining of its harbors along with the rest of the secret war to the World Court. The Court found the United States at fault. Subsequently the United States chose to disavow the jurisdiction of the Court.

More importantly, because the program leaked, it made it impossible for the Administration to back down without losing political clout. Once the veil of plausible deniability was pierced, it became futile to deny involvement. In effect, the United States President was held hostage to a questionable operation. Not only was the Administration required to support the Contras, but they also had to stick with El Salvador. This does not mean that it was not the intention of the Administration to stick to these programs, but there was a loss of strategic and operational flexibility. There could no longer be a graceful exit if the situation changed and a new policy was seen as more appropriate.

### C. SUMMARY

Nicaragua accentuates the need to have a strategic vision that is consistent with U.S. commitment. The quick covert fix is a fantasy. The paramilitary option will require that Congress support the program. Nicaragua also highlights the problems associated with putting together a political coalition that appeals to the diverse groups contending for power. It also reemphasizes the critical nature of asymmetric motivation. When the minimum objectives of the intervenor exceed the maximum that the defender is willing to concede, the defender will resist with the full weight of its capability. It will be very difficult for the protégé to achieve its ends with the limited force represented by paramilitary forces. Lastly, security was a dominant factor. Support for the Contras was one of this nation's most publicized paramilitary efforts. This not only complicated the tactical operations, but it highlighted the political nature of paramilitary operations. One of the most basic reasons that politicians turn to covert action is to limit their political exposure. Once exposed, it makes little sense to continue in that mode of operation. Either the politician has misread the public and they do support the operation. Or the initial read was correct, and the public is indifferent, or does not support the program at all. The point is that once exposed, either it will be possible to escalate the program, or it will have to be abandoned. It is a two edged sword. Proponents of the cause may want to leak in hopes of forcing an escalated

commitment, while foes may leak in hope of causing an abandonment. In either case, it is important to recognize the tactical as well as political role of security.



## V. CONCLUSIONS

The preceding chapters have attempted to induce a set of paramilitary criteria that are applicable across the spectrum of political environments. A thorough understanding of these criteria and their implications will allow political and military leaders to make informed decisions regarding their use. The criteria will also provide benchmarks to assess the future role that specific institutions should play in the conduct of these operations.

Paramilitary operations must be understood as political tools. As such, they must be grounded within a political policy that is broadly understood and accepted by the public. In today's environment it is almost a given that a clandestine or covert program will eventually become public. Once paramilitary support has been provided, it is essential to minimize the possibility that a program can become hostage to domestic political backlash. As shown in Cuba and Nicaragua, the political effects can be potentially devastating if there is not a clear and identifiable linkage to a broader policy. In addition to being linked to a broad strategy, they must also carry the necessary weight of commitment by the Administration and Congress.

There must also be reconciliation between the asymmetry of motivations. Recognizing that there are many competing interests, the intervenor must assess each potential protégé in terms of their objectives before providing support. In other words, the protégé's objectives must be justifiable under the intervenor's broadly understood political policy. Critics of paramilitary operations often cite the indiscriminate arming of factions with diverging long term interests from our own. Examples of this were the arming of French and Chinese communists during World War II, as well as the Somitistas in Nicaragua. Prior reconciliation of objectives would go along way toward correcting this.

Before committing support, the intervenor must be willing to live within the boundaries of the protégé's minimum and maximum objectives. These minimum objectives define the limits of cooperation that the protégé will allow. Below the minimum threshold,

the prospective protégé will be indifferent. He will likely accept any support that is offered, but he will not consent to being controlled by the intervenor. He will continue to independently pursue his minimum objectives, seeking help from anyone who will provide that minimum level of support. This may run counter to the political objectives of the intervenor. At the other end of the spectrum, the intervenor cannot expect to succeed when his minimum objectives exceed the maximum objectives of the protégé. Once the maximum objectives of the protégé are met, he will see further attempts to manipulate the situation as a threat to himself. In essence, he will bite the hand that fed him.

Given that paramilitary operations, like all military operations, are political tools, they must be designed to achieve politically feasible ends. If the minimum acceptable objective is the total destruction of a regime, it must be assumed that the threatened regime will resist with all means available. In the case studied, the paramilitary force was inadequate to overcome the forces that could be brought to bear against it. This explains the dismal results of paramilitary action during Type B conflicts. Unlimited objectives demand means that are superior to the defending regime. If the objective allows a political compromise, it may be possible for paramilitary forces to play an important role.

The previous case studies have shown the need for a permissive organizational environment. It seems evident that the intervenor cannot expect to carry out a offensive, or defensive, paramilitary operation without the sympathies of significant portions of the indigenous population. Cuba was a clear example of this. Castro was able to effectively rid Cuba of the opposition. Those that survived were concentrated in Miami and could not provide the support mechanisms necessary to ensure the guerrilla option. Subsequently, assumptions concerning the viability of a paramilitary force were in error.

All cases reconfirmed the need for extensive logistical capability at all levels of conflict. The mechanisms become harder as the environment becomes more benign. This is an interesting paradox. During World War II when there was the largest physical threat, the logistical infrastructure was readily available to be tapped. In comparison with the

conventional operations that were taking place, the support rendered to unconventional warfare was minuscule. As the environment changed, and the physical threat diminished, the overt support of the military was no longer available. The CIA had to set up elaborate front companies and make enormous investments in logistical capability. This included the acquisition of whole airlines and shipping companies. Without the declaration of hostilities, it was politically harder to tap the resources of the Defense Department. Special arrangements had to be made to acquire these services. Nicaragua showed the critical nature of logistics. After Congress denied the Administration the use of even the CIA's logistic capability, they were forced to create a private capability. Ultimately this private capability proved to be inadequate and the Contras were nearly forced to capitulate for lack of supplies. Only after Congress restored the ability of the U.S. to provide logistical support did a viable paramilitary infrastructure reappear.

Aside from logistics, the cases have confirmed the importance of security in the tactical role. More importantly, they have shown that the ability to operate in a security environment has strategic implications as well. Exposure strips away the veil of anonymity for the policy maker. Once a clandestine operation is revealed, the political options are reduced to two. The program can be stopped as it was in Cuba, or it may be brought out into the open and fully supported. This is what happened in Nicaragua. The Reagan Administration was put in the position of having to expend political capital to keep the Contra program alive. Having invested this capital, the Administration was committed to a level of support commensurate with their rhetoric to save the program. In this case, it was the total removal of the Sandinista regime. There was no longer any room for compromise. Politics are about compromise. Once an acceptable option between the minimum and maximum allowable for both sides presents itself, it is imperative that the policy maker have the flexibility to accept that option. In the face of Sandinista compromises, the Administration was forced to continue to support the Contras when it may have been in our interests to reach an agreement.

What is important to take from these cases, is the recognition that the decision to use paramilitary forces is more a function of political constraints, rather than military necessity. Once this is clear, the above criteria provide easily identifiable standards to assess a particular paramilitary program. They also lend themselves to being used as tools to gauge the effectiveness of possible institutions to conduct these operations. As political constraints mount, leaders will have less flexibility in terms of traditional responses. In order to do "something", they will eventually be forced to consider alternative solutions such as paramilitary operations. Operations properly thought out, and properly executed, with respect to the above criteria can play an important role in terms of furthering our national objectives.

## LIST OF REFERENCES

*A National Security Strategy of Engagement and Enlargement.*, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington DC, 1994.

Alsop, Stuart J.O., and Braden, Thomas, *Sub Rosa: The OSS and American Espionage*, Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., New York, 1964.

Asprey, Robert B., *War in the Shadows: The Guerrilla in History*, William Morrow and Company, Inc., New York, 1994.

Bank, Aaron., *From OSS to Green Berets: The Birth of Special Forces*, Presidio Press, Novato, CA, 1986.

Barnett F. R., Tovar H.B., and Shultz, R.H. (eds.), *Special Operations in US Strategy*, National Defense University Press, Washington DC, 1884.

Black, Ian & Morris, B., *Israel's Secret Wars, A History of Israel's Intelligence Service*, Grove Weidenfeld, New York, 1991.

Cockburn, Leslie, *Out of Control*, The Atlantic Monthly Press, New York, 1987.

Collins, J. M., *Special Operations Forces: An Assessment*, National Defense University Press, Washington DC, 1994.

Cookridge, E.H., *Inside SOE: The Story of Special Operations in Western Europe 1940-45*, Arthur Barker, London, 1966.

Draper, Theodore, *Castro's Revolution Myths and Realities*, Frederick A. Praeger, New York, 1962.

Etheredge, Lloyd, S., *Can Governments Learn? American Foreign Policy and Central American Revolutions*, Pergamon Press, New York, 1985.

Foot, M.R.D., *SOE in France*, Her Majesty's Stationary Office, London, 1966.

Garvin, Glenn, *Everybody Had His Own Gringo: The CIA & the Contras*, Brassey's Inc., Washington D.C., 1992.

Godson R., (Ed.), *Intelligence Requirements for the 1990's, Collection, Analysis, Counterintelligence and Covert Action*, Lexington Books, Toronto.

Haas M. E. *Air Commando! 1950-1975: Twenty-five years at the Tip of the Spear*.

Halperin, Morton, "Should U.S. Fight Secret Wars", *Harper's* Sept 1984.

Hilsman, Rodger, *American Guerrilla, My War Behind Japanese Lines*, Brassey's Inc., New York, 1990.

Hunt, Howard, *Give Us This Day*, Arlington House, New York, 1993.

Johnson, H., Artme, M., San Román, J. P., Olivia, E., Williams, E.R., *The Bay of Pigs: The Leaders' Story of Brigade 2506*, W.W. Norton & Company, New York, 1964.

Kesaris, P. L. (ed.), *Operation ZAPATA: The "Ultrasensitive" Report and Testimony of the Board of Inquiry on the Bay of Pigs*, University Publications of America, Inc., Maryland, 1981.

Lake, Anthony, *Somoza Falling*, Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, 1989.

Leahy, William D., *Memorandum for the Secretary of War and Secretary of the Navy, "Establishment of a central intelligence service upon liquidation of OSS*, 19 September 1945.

Lazo, Mario, *American Policy Failures in Cuba: Dagger in the Heart*, Funk & Wagnalls, New York, 1968.

Lewis, S. J., *Jedburgh Team Operations in Support of the 12th Army Group, August 1944*, Combat Studies Institute, Fort Leavenworth, KS, 1991.

Lankford, N. D. (ed.), *OSS against the Reich: The World War II Diaries of Colonel David K. E. Bruce*, The Kent State University Press, Ohio, 1991.

Meyer, K. E., Szulc, T., *The Cuban Invasion: The Chronicle of a Disaster*, Fredrick A. Praeger, New York, 1962.

Nolan, David, *The Ideology of the Sandinistas and the Nicaraguan Revolution*, Institute of Interamerican Studies, University of Miami, Coral Gables, FL, 1984.

Prados, John. *Presidents Secret Wars: CIA and Pentagon Covert Operations Since World War II.*, William Morrow and Company, Inc., New York, 1987.

Robinson, William I., & Norsworthy, Kent, *David and Goliath: The U.S. War againsts Nicaragua*, Monthly Review Press, New York, 1987.

Smith, Richard H., *OSS The Secret History of America's First Central Intelligence Agency*, University of California Press, Berkely, 1972.

Tierney, John J. Jr., *Somoza and Sandinistas: The US and Nicaragua in the Twentieth Century*, Council for Inter-American Security, Wahington D.C., 1982.

Treverton, Gregory, *Covert Action: The Limits of Intervention in the Postwar World*. Basic Books, New York, 1987.

Turner, Robert F., *Nicaragua v. United States: A Look at the Facts*, Pergamon Brassey's International Defense Publishers, Washington, 1987.

Vandenburg, Memorandum for the Assistant Director for Special Operations [Donald Galloway], "Functions of the Office of Special Operations," 25 October 1946.

Wickham-Crowly, Timothy P., *Guerrillas & Revolution in Latin America, A Comparative Study of Insurgents and Regimes Since 1956*, Princeton University Press, New Jersey, 1992.

Wyden, Peter, *Bay of Pigs: The Untold Story*, Simon and Schuster, New York, 1979.

Warner, Michael. (Ed.), *CIA Cold War Records: The CIA under Harry Truman*, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D.C., 1994.

Interviews:

Dr. Larry Cable, University of North Carolina, Wilmington, on 8/22/95 at the Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey, CA.



## INITIAL DISTRIBUTION LIST

	<u>No. Copies</u>
1. Defense Technical Information Center 8725 John J. Kingman Rd., STE 0944 Ft. Belvoir, VA 22060-6218	2
2. Library Code 13 Naval Postgraduate School Monterey, CA 93943-5002	2
3. The Honorable H. Allen Holmes Assistant Secretary of Defense of SO/LIC The Pentagon RM 2E258 Washington, DC 20301-2500	1
4. GEN Wayne A. Downing, USA Commander in Chief US Special Operations Command MacDill AFB, FL 33608-6001	1
5. Commander in Chief US Special Operations Command ATTN: Mr. Anthony Normand MacDill AFB, FL 33608-6001	2
6. The JCS Staff J-3 Special Operations Branch Washington, DC 20318-3000	1
7. Superintendent ATTN: Professor Gordon H. McCormick (Code NS/Mc) Naval Postgraduate School Monterey, CA 93943-5000	1

8.	Superintendent ATTN: Professor Daniel Moran (Code NS/MD) Naval Postgraduate School Monterey, CA 93943-5000	1
9.	HQ USASOC ATTN: AOHS/Dr. Richard Stewart Ft. Bragg, NC 28307-5200	1
10.	U.S. Army Center for Military History ATTN: Dr. David Hogan 1099 14th St. NW Washington, DC 20005-3402	1
11.	USAFSOS/EDOJ 344 Tully St. Hurlburt FLD, FL 32544-5826	1
12.	USAFSOS/EDRT 338 Tully St. Hurlburt FLD, FL 32544-5828	1
13.	Library Naval War College Newport, RI 02840	1
14.	Strategic Studies Group (SSG) Naval War College Newport, RI 02840	1
15.	Department of Military Strategy National War College (NWMS) Ft. Leslie J. McNair Washington, DC 20319-6111	1
16.	US Army Command & General Staff College Concepts and Doctrine Directorate ATTN: Mr. John B. Hunt Ft. Leavenworth, KS 66027-6900	2

- |     |   |   |
|-----|---|---|
| 17. | US Military Academy<br>ATTN: Department of Military History<br>West Point, NY 10996   | 1 |
| 18. | Marquat Memorial Library<br>US Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center & School<br>Rm. C287, Bldg. D3915<br>ATTN: Mr. Fred Fuller<br>Ft. Bragg, NC 28307-5000 | 1 |
| 19. | Jennifer Duncan<br>Center for the Study of Political Violence<br>Naval Post Graduate School<br>Monterey, CA 93943-5000  | 5 |
| 20. | Hoover Institution for War, Revolution and Peace<br>Palo Alto, CA 94306   | 1 |
| 21. | Library<br>Air War College<br>Maxwell AFB, AL36112-6428   | 1 |
| 22. | United States Special Operations Command<br>ATTN: SOJ5-C<br>7701 Tampa Point Blvd.<br>MacDill AFB, FL 33621-5323  | 1 |
| 23. | Hurlburt Base Library<br>16SVS/SVRL<br>ATTN: Susan Whitson<br>410 Cody Ave.<br>Hurlburt Fld, FL 32544-5417  | 1 |
| 24. | USASOC<br>Directorate of History and Museums<br>ATTN: AOHS-Dr Stewart<br>Ft. Bragg, NC 28307-5200   | 2 |
| 25. | Mr. James R. Cox<br>114 Loma Vista Dr.<br>Burlingame, CA 94010  | 1 |

26. Mr. Alan Coyne  
240 Castenada Dr.  
Millbrae, CA 94030

1